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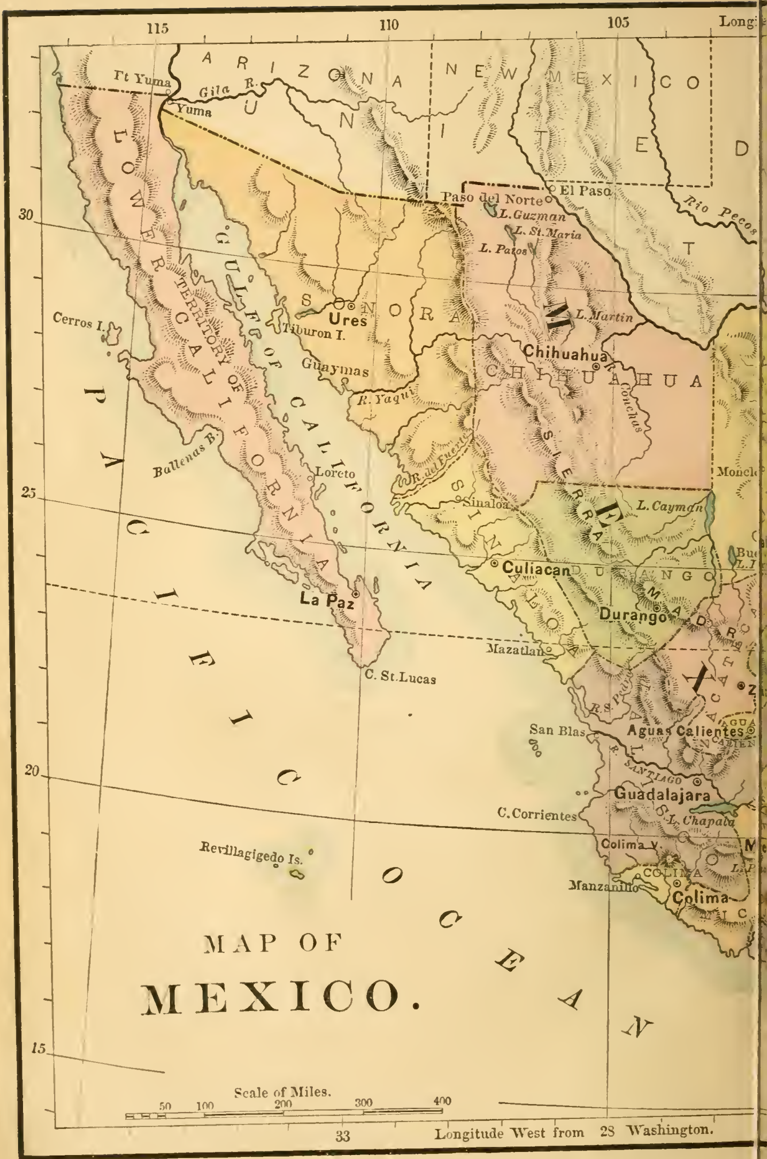
MAP OF
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Durango
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C. St. Lucas
Mazatlan
ZACATECAS
R. S. Pedro
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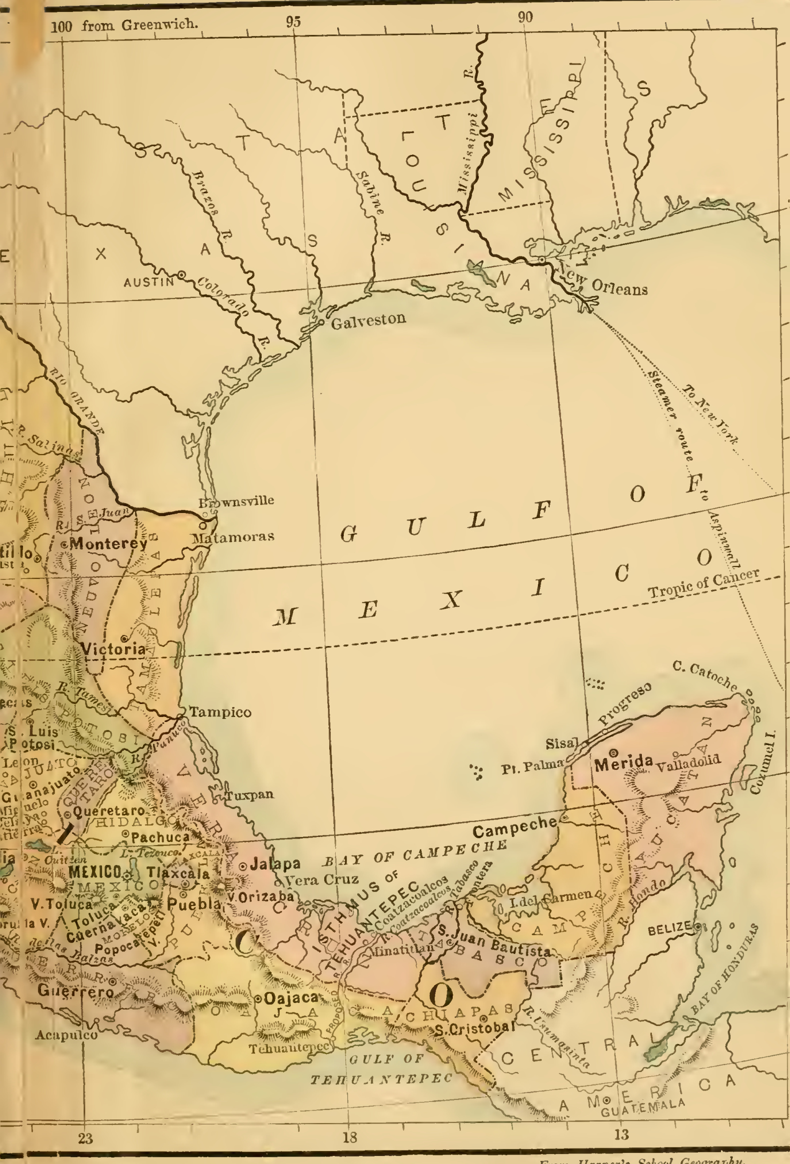
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RIO GRANDE
R. Salinas
Brownsville
Matamoras
Steamer route to Aspinwall
To New York
GULF OF MEXICO
Tropic of Cancer
NUEVO LEON
S. Juan R.
Monterey
TAMAULIPAS
Victoria
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Tampico
Panuco R.
S. Luis Potosi
Guanajuato
Queretaro
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Toluca
Cuernavaca
MORELOS
Popocatepetl V.
Puebla
V. Orizaba
Jalapa
Vera Cruz
VERA CRUZ
R. de las Balzas
Guerrero
GUERRERO
Acapulco
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Tehuantepec
GULF OF TEHUANTEPEC
ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC
PROPOSED R. R.
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Coatzacoalcos
Minatitlan
Tabasco R.
Frontera
S. Juan Bautista
TABASCO
CHIAPAS
S. Cristobal
R. Usumasinta
BAY OF CAMPECHE
Campeche
CAMPECHE
I. del Carmen
YUCATAN
Merida
Valladolid
Sisal
Pt. Palma
Progreso
C. Catoche
Cozumel I.
R. Hondo
BELIZE
BAY OF HONDURAS
CENTRAL AMERICA
GUATEMALA
MEXICO

From Harper's School Geography.

MEXICO OF TO-DAY

BY

SOLOMON BULKLEY GRIFFIN

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK [illegible]
HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

[1886]

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PREFACE.

The writer of the following pages, whose contents appeared in a series of letters to *The Springfield Republican*, lays no claim to having prepared a guide-book, a history, or an exhaustive treatise. He has aimed to deal fairly, and in a representative way, with Mexico as she is; to exhibit the country, the climate, the people, their politics, their life, and the national outlook, exactly as they all united to impress an unprejudiced observer from the United States. The deep human interests, the problems of society and government, the conditions that surround business, the possibilities for the railroads, the charms of scenery and phases of a romantic and ancient civilization—these are all treated from the standpoint of American citizenship. If the result shall happily be to give the reader a more intelligent conception of our southern sister republic, and to invoke patience and charity in judging of the questions that must long vex the statesmanship of Mexico, the purpose of this little volume will have been abundantly accomplished.

The author wishes to acknowledge his special obligation to Frederic R. Guernsey, of the city of Mexico.

Springfield, Mass.

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MEXICO OF TO-DAY.

CHAPTER I.

FROM NEW YORK TO MEXICO.

I.

Continental Railroad Building.

From Chicago to the city of Mexico lies an iron roadway about three thousand miles long. Its existence illustrates something of what has been accomplished in developing the resources of the United States since Samuel Bowles made his trip "Across the Continent" with Schuyler Colfax in 1865. Then the Union Pacific road was just beginning to feel its pioneer way towards the setting sun and into the comparatively unknown West. It was a vast national enterprise, the great work of peace to follow the war, whose progress was a marvel; and the undertaking chained the attention of the continent. But the longing with which the advance of quick transit was then looked for can never be paralleled in the United States, and the contrast with to-day is most impressive.

Now railways net the country like the web of an industrious spider. The Northern Pacific, the Union and Central Pacific, the Southern Pacific, and the Atlantic and Pacific roads are in operation—each with connecting lines that slash the country in all directions—and Canada, also, has her transcontinental railway. To all these must be added this link between the neighboring North American republics, an achievement which contributes much to the glory of Boston as a financial centre.

The citizen of some less favored spot may on occasion indulge in good-humored raillery over that provincialism which is so characteristic of the Hub of the Universe; but he will not forget at the same time that the conservatism of State Street has made it a reservoir of capital upon which the growing and often presumptuously intolerant West has made the most liberal drafts. And the new West has not yet worn out its welcome, or visibly lowered the supply of the wherewithal needed to build railroads and to found and develop cities and counties and states. The influence of Boston is something to be proud of on the material side, no less than are those literary and social features that will go without any new rehearsal here. Her capitalists pushed forward the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé, and the Mexican Central railroads, which form the route over which the land tourist reaches Mexico. Our general observation is further illustrated by the fact that Boston men are also leading spirits in the management of the Northern Pacific, the Union Pacific, and the Oregon Navigation Company. In fact, capital from the chief city of Massachusetts goes far afield now, as it used to cross the seas in the East Indian and China and South American trade, and it adventures still under trained and able pilots and captains.

II.

Chicago and its Atmosphere.

For the Easterner the West includes Chicago, just as it used to do, but such a view only marks the "freshness" of him who holds it. Illinois is the old West now, the seat of a comparatively ancient civilization, distant only a day and a night from New York; and membership in the old settlers' association entitles one to the same veneration that young people paid to the survivors of the Revolution before the civil war gave us a new and greater generation of heroes.

But this largest city of the West impresses one still with more of promise than fulfilment, astonishing as her growth has been. It is the fashion among newspapers to cavil at Chicago, but the young giant of the prairies is only in the first flush of youth—the very dawn of mighty manhood. There will be method and solidity in the development of the city from this point, in proof of which one can look at the grouping of the magnificent public buildings that will, after a time, be nowhere surpassed in the Union. In her residences Chicago has come to lead all the American cities, with possibly the exception of Washington. Her rich men have built many palaces, some of them most offensively pretentious, but the prevailing architecture is not unattractive, and much of it is distinctly meritorious. The best houses are constructed for a future, though the descendants of the builders may not occupy them; and granite, marble, brown, gray, and green stone, and brick are piled up in many splendid forms. The variety of architecture employed marks a satisfactory advance over New York conventionalism, and the prim brown-stone front that stands stiffly up to its neighbor is going out of fashion. The new houses are set in the midst of grass plots, and each has been given a pleasing individuality and independence.

We begin to find in Chicago a change of air—that the young men are at the front. The leaders of fifty and sixty years old are accustomed to step aside and let younger hands bear the burden of the load. It is a division of labor that youth applauds, and by such withdrawals something is conceded to the need for the conservation of human life which is so universally ignored in American society. The thrill, the push, the resistless vigor of an intense first outpouring of energy mark every enterprise, and make up the very atmosphere of business. No need here to repeat that weary Eastern plaint—Give the young man a chance! His is the power by right of public demand in the West.

III.

Random Notes of the West.

In going to Mexico we cut across Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas, cross the southeastern corner of Colorado, pass down through the centre of New Mexico, and touch the extreme western tip of Texas at El Paso. Then we run down over the table-lands of Mexico. With good connections the city of Mexico is distant a week from New York.

From Chicago to Kansas City consumes from 12.30 P.M. until 9 A.M. of the following day. Journeying over the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad one is not overwhelmed with admiration for what is exhibited by the way. Even in Illinois the newness is cheap and even painful—the churches and school-houses are all after the same ugly models--yet the villages and cities are entitled to full respect as pioneer work, and they are impressive as the sure evidences of an established prosperity that is rearing its own enduring monuments. The best is crude enough at present—Dickens told of it all not very untruly in his "American Notes"—but, withal, the outlook is grand beyond words when we look forward to the time when this heart of the continent shall beat with full life, and teem with the vitality of perfect maturity.

Down from Kansas City the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé road rolls out one thousand and fifty miles to the Texan border. An hour between trains admits of a trip in the cable cars up and down the abrupt bluffs that gully that most western city of Missouri, where one hundred thousand people have been packed into a spot adapted for ten thousand. The cable system appears to work perfectly, and the people are accommodated for the present; but in time economy and convenience will harness electricity to this local problem. Already the Daft system is doing a work much like this in Baltimore, for the infancy of electrical development is about over.

The ride from Kansas City to El Paso, Texas, occupies from Wednesday at 10.40 A.M. to 3 P.M. on Friday. Through Kansas there is displayed a beautiful panorama of cultivated farms, and a community life that is unmistakably from New England. It is worth while to notice the universal reign of the local newspaper through this region that is attracting rather more than its share of settlers. The *Lawrence Journal*, *Topeka Capital*, *Emporia News*, and *Dodge City Globe*—these are a few of the dailies that appear along the way, and each hamlet is proud of its weekly trumpet of fame. These sheets are full of the local color, for home-doings furnish their chief feature. The editor understands his mission so well that none need tell him in what the primary office of the home journal consists—he sees and fills it with intelligence and industry.

The pretentious and bombastic period of frontier journalism is largely succeeded by something sensible and even strong. In the passing glimpses given of many towns the office of the newspaper bore its conspicuous position and sign on the principal street. In one case the young editor might have been seen gazing down the street from the outside stairs leading to his lofty sanctum. One fancied him the exiled graduate of an Eastern college, to whom the passing of these modern packages of outside life, that whizzed in and away over the shining rails, were a tantalizing mockery. On the chill winter landscape this straggling and slovenly yet most ambitious town seemed like a blot. It is possible that a depressing impression of this sort intrudes at times, unbidden, as the editor weekly pictures a glowing future for Blankville. A place like this readily yields the dull sadness which colored Mr. Howe's "Story of a Country Town."

There is little to vary the monotony of the journey except meal-time. At Kansas City we passed beyond the dining-car, and thereafter to Mexico lived on the country in the old-fashioned way—twenty-five minutes for breakfast, dinner, and supper, the charge being 75 cents or $1.00, the latter rate prevailing on the line of the Mexican Central. Timid and deliberate people are at a discount on such occasions, when the all-abounding commercial traveller is the one masterly spirit of the abbreviated half-hour. It takes long practice to enable one to bolt food enough to sustain life in such a tumultuous ordeal. The soup, roast beef, ham, and chicken are brought on without delay or formality, and every passenger pitches in for number one.

Days rise and wane as we speed along, and night above the limitless prairie gives the solemn effect of an expanse of ocean. The faithful cigar, abundant light literature, an occasional game of cards, and the views from the rear coach—these sum up the resources that lie outside of the chance human companionship that is best of all. The stiffness which makes the railroad car at the East a cave of decorous gloom falls off as prairies stretch to the clouds, and people embark for long journeys. Native kindliness finds a direct and pleasing expression; fellow-travellers are more neighborly and friendly; they act out the warm impulses of genuine natures. The whole current of life is fresher and more honest. Yet every individual right is recognized and scrupulously respected. One puts off an armor that has been forged to protect "society," and is apt to realize anew that social intercourse no longer implies a state of warfare; that the coat of iron is an absurd thing, and valuable only to masqueraders.

IV.

Expert Views of the Cattle Business.

Most of the passengers down to the border are interested in the cattle business, and the sum of their conclusions is that this industry has taken its place as a settled business in which success must depend on a large capital and careful management. There is money in it still, and good returns on investments, but the days of fabulous profits for green men are about over. Like mining, cattle-raising has been legitimized, and requires expert handling on a large scale. Cattle are very prolific in New Mexico, and great herds are driven from there to develop and fatten in Montana. Occasionally a territorial magnate, a judge, a colonel, or governor, steps on board and enlivens the smoking-room for a few stations. He generally enters into the cattle-talk in a way to show where his treasure is, and that his heart is there also. We hear about "a pretty bunch of cattle;" "my bulls are not pampered, sir; never fed 'em a bit of grain in the world;" "they are all white-faced;" "not all thorough-breds, but just as good, every bit;" and so on.

Interesting local information also leaks out. It appears that Santa Fé boasts "the best society of the whole region," but that Albuquerque "has the finest hotel in the territory of New Mexico, and is foremost in enterprise because her newspapers are the best." This calls attention to the fact that a leading cattle-man has been laboring for a day to persuade a consumptive eastern bookseller to settle in "our town" and start a weekly newspaper. The inducements held out are a thousand-dollar plant, lots for a house and office, and $500 of guaranteed advertising; an extra touch includes the hiring of the bookseller's wife as the local school-teacher. It looked at the moment as if another New Mexican town would have its newspaper.

Through New Mexico one sees low adobe buildings, and bright-blanketed Zuñi or Pueblo Indians, and catches other glimpses of that older life towards which we are speeding; that enlightenment which was ancient and powerful when Columbus discovered the new world; and which is said to have possessed its cities, temples, and palaces for at least a thousand years when the Northmen touched the northern coast, eight hundred years ago.

V.

A Theatrical Venture in Texas.

There is a wait of three hours at the border Texan town of El Paso, a place which confidently expects to rank as the Chicago of the Southwest, and is certain to be a great distributing centre. Five railroad lines enter the town—the Southern Pacific, Mexican Central, Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio, the Texas and Pacific, and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fé — and another is promised. Mr. Huntington engages to construct a road to the northeast which shall tap coal-fields said to be located near White Oak City—a most important project. Cheap coal is the great lack of Mexico, and here is one of the many schemes that promise to remedy the drawback. At present El Paso boasts only about 6000 inhabitants, but it does a great business. The chief public feature is a court-house in process of erection; there is a public square, daily newspapers, several hotels, abundant saloons, and members of all the learned professions in profusion.

The inhabitants of El Paso were to see, on the evening of our flying visit, the "greatest American actress" appear in a play especially prepared to display her transcendent abilities. She was a blonde of considerable personal charms, whose name was lamentably unfamiliar. In visiting the local bookstore, a cowboy was discovered in the act of asking the amiable proprietor for "a bottle of your best perfumed hair-oil." This was proof positive that the actress had won an admirer in her walk from the depot to the Grand Central Hotel; but the rude knight of the clanking spurs established this surmise by stating that "all the boys are going to-night." The golden star and her disconsolate looking attendants were evidently in for two lucky nights —a lift of which they obviously stood in the most crying need.

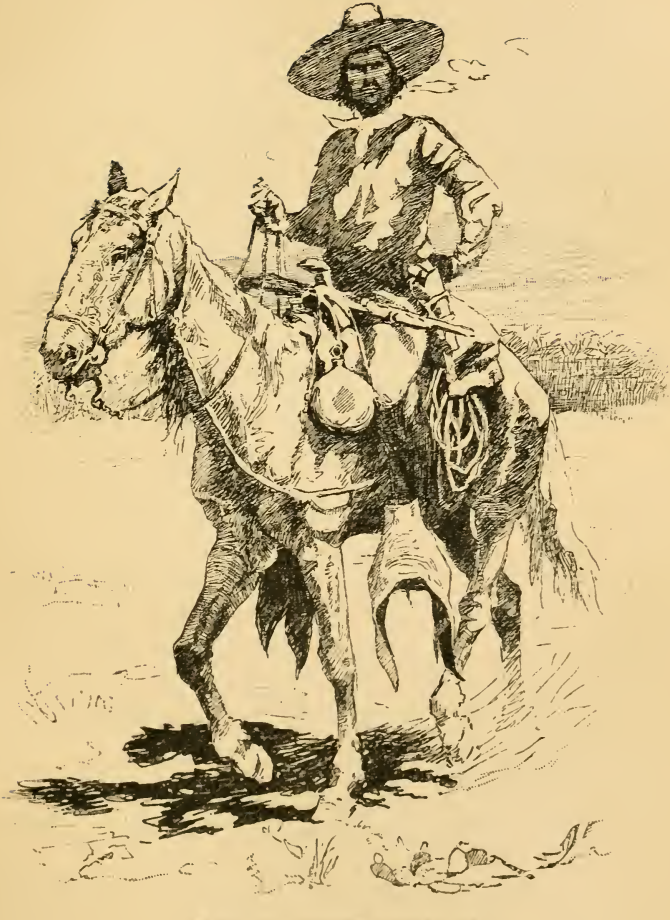
The United States collector of customs at El Paso has lately been changed, and the democratic official is conducting a sharp war on smuggling. Some leading citizens are concerned in recent developments, and they are finding their irregularities expensive. About one hundred officials guard the Mexican side of the Rio Grande River, and our border is patrolled by some twenty-five inspectors. The amount of illicit traffic between the two republics is said to be enormous, and it is likely to continue so, though the restraining hand of the United States government is, just now, pretty sharply felt.

VI.

First Impressions on the Border.

Half a mile over the river is Paso del Norte, the starting-point of the Mexican Central. Our train leaves from the Texas side, and on reaching Mexican soil the custom-house official, in his gaudy sombrero, discharges his duty most politely. The examination of handbags is formal and expeditious; and when trunks are searched no unreasonable objections are raised. But some unfortunates buy a bit of experience in railroading. Those who come on through tickets are allowed one hundred and fifty pounds of baggage, but such as have been unwise enough to purchase passage on the spot are restricted to thirty-five pounds, and one pilgrim stranger pays out $6.50 extra on a modest trunk that is checked for the city of Mexico. A money-changer in the depot stands ready to turn our greenbacks into the familiar silver dollars of the country, reckoned at eighty-five cents; and pockets and bags bulge and grow heavy under the transfer.

Here, too, the old-world distinction among travellers appears. The Pullman coach is more palatial beside its fellows here than up North; then comes the first-class car, furnished with cane seats and much plainer in its interior work than an ordinary car in the States; the second-class offers unrelieved hard-wood seats, and more severe plainness; while the third-class contains long benches that line its sides and run down the centre; conveyances to



MEXICAN CUSTOM-HOUSE GUARD.

which a Bowery horse-car in New York would seem soft luxury.

The entire change of customs and of language has a temporarily depressing effect on the traveller, though the train hands are Americans. The new order is rudely emphasized when one is routed out at six o'clock the next morning to prepare for breakfast, and is informed that such is the custom of the country. 'Tis a dismal beginning, though the early start is an obvious necessity of this southern climate, where business must be transacted in the cool of the day. The railroad maintains eating-houses along the way where the food is abundant and wholesome, though attended with an inevitable lack of anything like dainty cooking or service.

We pass down through the states of Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Queretaro, and Hidalgo—eight states of the twenty-seven—and enter the federal district and the ancient capital, a distance of some 1250 miles out of the about 1500 that make up the length of Mexico.

This is the table-land, from 6000 to 8000 feet above sea-level, the highland walled between the spurs of the Cordillera—a broad, brown expanse stretching to the distant treeless and forbidding mountains. The landscape is practically unrelieved for 750 miles to the city of Zacatecas, and lack of water is its most impressive feature; a scattered growth of cactus, clumps of mesquit-bushes, knots of grass sprinkling the sand, cottonwood-trees at rare intervals by the watercourses, and occasionally a Mexican village—these are the wayside incidents.

VII.

Features of the Country, and Notable Cities.

It is a grazing region from Paso del Norte to Chihuahua, with some silver-mining districts lying distant ten to one hundred miles from the railroad on either side. Below that point cactus shrubs soon become almost tropical trees, and the prickly pear and maguey plant—the latter used in making pulque, the national tipple—that begin to prevail are familiar to the eye, through the small editions that appear in all collections of house-plants. Farther down the prickly pear is trained into a hedge that possesses some advantages over the Yankee barbed wire that is in universal use at the North, and may now be discovered on some well-kept Mexican ranches. Wherever water is available for agriculture these highlands yield great crops; corn grows abundantly, as do all grains and cotton, and great fields of barley now line the earth with pleasant strips of green. In the neighborhood of Galera is a broad and surpassingly rich valley irrigated from a never-failing lake supply.

Zacatecas is a famously rich mining region. The curves and climbing qualities of the Mexican Central at this point are something remarkable, and trains pass just above the city of 75,000 people by winding around the hills that encompass it. The road here was built with earth carried on the backs of the peons or native peasantry, who did not take kindly to American methods. A most richly adorned cathedral is the boast of the place, and it is a magnificent relic of the days of priest rule, when 12½ cents was levied on every $8 of ore taken from the mines; there is an $800,000 cathedral back at Chihuahua, also built from this tax; and in every considerable town the Church has reared noble architecture that has been sequestered by the government.

Queretaro (Ka-ret′-a-ro) appeals to the traveller whose preliminary knowledge of Mexico may have been largely gleaned in newspaper reading. He remembers that here Maximilian was shot. But the city makes other claims on the attention. It somewhat resembles Havana, with winding, narrow streets, houses high and variegated in color, and little plazas filled with tropical plants; while the aqueduct, some of whose arches are ninety feet high, is the most splendid structure of the kind in the country, surpassing even the massive masonry reared in the federal capital. Here, too, in 1848, the Mexican Congress ratified the treaty of peace with the United States. But it is thinking of Maximilian that the tourist will enter the city, and that sad figure will linger in his mind as he leaves it. For as the train passes Queretaro, on the crest of the low and rocky "Hill of the Bells" will be noted the three black crosses that mark the spot where the emperor and his faithful generals, Mejia and Miramon, were shot. They looked out, on that June morning in 1867, over a lovely valley in which this city of 30,000 inhabitants is planted.

A hundred miles nearer to the city of Mexico, too, is the town of Tula, the ancient Toltec capital, rich in ruins and antiquities that establish the high civilization of a vanished people.

Still southward the horizon widens until only the dark-blue outlines of distant mountains confine the eye. Over all Mexico the patient ass plays his most useful part in the antiquated methods that are still in vogue. As the trains roll up to all stations troops of peons, men, women, and children, bearing fruits or food, eagerly display their wares and press them upon the travellers. This civilization wears an Eastern aspect, and beggars in force are not wanting to fill in the picture. The feelings of compassionate repulsion which the lame, the halt, and the blind, the deformed and aged in all stages of decay, inspire as they appear on undress parade, are a novel experience in American travel, but a callous familiarity with their wretchedness is speedily acquired. Yet one never gets away from the sad undercurrent of misery that always qualifies picturesque Mexico.

These December evenings, nights, and early mornings are cool, but the heat of the noons and afternoons seems oppressive and unseasonable to those who have just seen snow in Kansas. We are in the land of bright shawls and blankets, serapes, and the natural fitness of these wraps is evident where cotton is the garb of the lower classes, and coats are a discomfort during the heat of the day. They are worn at morning and night, and fit the men with natural grace and the ease of habit. Train time at the various stops draws heavily on the inhabitants, who gather in force in the afternoons about the large depots, dressed as for a festive event. The Mexican horses have been improved by the importation of foreign stock, and Barnum shows no sightlier animals than are grouped at every station ; and no Arab rides his steed with a daintier grace than does the average Mexican gentleman. All day long silver clouds lazily drift across a perfect sky, and not even the most harried and practical American can at first resist the indolent poetry of this strange life.

CHAPTER II.

MEXICO, PAST AND PRESENT.

I.

The Glory of its History and Romance.

Mexico has a magnificent background upon which her story should be painted, but the attempt to tell her history in a few paragraphs would be only less futile and elusive than the proposition to "interpret God in thirty-nine articles." Very interesting is Mexico to the lover of the romantic in nature and men, but far more attractive is she to the student of American life. Here the Spaniards landed in 1519, or a century before the Pilgrims reached that "stern and rock-bound coast"—which was not so in fact—about which we have all declaimed. But before that time Mexico had become the seat of a wonderful American civilization. Against the youthful memories of New England, over which historical societies inform themselves, and which reach back of that famous "Welcome, Englishmen!" only a little way into nomadic savagery, this hoary seat of empire offers her traditions, that have been said to extend into the past a thousand years before Christ appeared in that Asiatic country of which this is the constant reminder.

But it is popular now to discount all this, and even to impeach the work of Prescott. From the sixth century Mexico presents her connected account of the tribes or races that rose and fell and mingled to produce the dominant Aztecs and their Montezumas, whom Cortez found here, and first of them all are the Toltecs, who are supposed to have been the Mound-builders of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. What a field for investigation, what an absorbing pursuit is here—to follow the Toltecs southward, to identify one's self with the original American civilization, to know the story of a continent!

So says the young and unspoiled Bohemian out of his unvexed soul, as he declares with scorn that rich men have no capacity for skimming the cream off from life. This boy, who never tasted gold or measured his aims with accepted standards, believes that riches shrivel the soul and contract the life, and, with the enthusiasm of historical conquest fresh upon him, he actually despises men who retire from arduous acquisition in the market-place only to seek the Dead-Sea apples of politics, or to chase that fickle and unsatisfying thing called "society." To make what other men know of this ancient life one's own, to tread anew in old ways and catch therein the color of vanished things, to delve deeper than any have yet done, to unearth the hidden and the forgotten, to paint the romance, the poetry, the history, to renew on paper or canvas the very thing that existed—this is calculated to strike the dullest imagination into a glow! And truly men have yielded to more harmful master-passions than this would be. But one needs money and time wherewith to master the advantages with which this country dazzles and woos every admirer of the picturesque.

II.

Hints of the Ancient Civilization.

There could be no more fascinating employment for the long evenings of the New England winter than to study the characteristics and story of this sunny land as they have been told by Humboldt, Prescott, and other writers. These men are held in high honor by the people here. The work of the blind American historian, who of course never saw the country, is accepted as an authority by the Mexicans, and German residents have placed a tablet on the house which Humboldt occupied. The past is much better photographed in the books than the present; but modern Mexico the tourist can best see for himself.

To call the native Mexicans Indians misleads the New-Englander, who will straightway identify these people with those Indians in Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" show that shocked Boston by giving a Sunday exhibition. Whether Wendell Phillips gathered any material for his lecture on the "Lost Arts" from Mexico I do not remember, but it is certain to my mind that he might have done so. The original state of the Mexicans is said to have been "much superior to that of the Spaniards themselves when they were first known to the Phœnicians, that of the Gauls when first known to the Greeks, or that of the Germans and Britons when first known to the Romans;" and that is putting the case so far within the bounds of truth as to be ridiculous.

These people were well housed, decently and often splendidly clothed. They enjoyed vapor baths, made cloth, had a pretty full equipment of household goods, maintained schools and even colleges, commemorated passing events in rude sculpture and picture-writings or paintings, farmed pretty intelligently, and did some mining; they (or an anterior and superior race) had reared palaces, temples, and pyramids, and constructed aqueducts and masonry that would not have discredited the best modern railroad; and they even played foot and hand ball, with lawn-tennis, perhaps! Their mortar far surpassed the modern article in enduring solidity.

Children were brought up in a pretty stiff way. The child who told a lie had its lips pricked with the thorn of an aloe, and persistence in that sort of thing led to a splitting of the lip. The Mexican father talked to his son after this fashion:

> "Never tell a falsehood, because a lie is a heinous sin! Speak ill of nobody. Be not dissolute, for thereby thou wilt incense the gods, and they will cover thee with infamy. Steal not, nor give thyself up to gaming; otherwise thou wilt be a disgrace to thy parents, whom thou oughtest rather to honor, for the education they have given thee. If thou wilt be virtuous thy example will put the wicked to shame."

Be it remembered that this was long, long before the days of the copy-book in New England, and quite anterior to the rule of Rev. Dr. Dorus Clark's catechism.

But even then there were professional teachers who regarded morality and a religious belief as distinct things—with so great emphasis on the belief part that the altars of a great stone god of vague and formless appearance, but much possibility in the line of hideous suggestiveness, were made to run never-ending streams of blood. Think of a sacrificial stone that is now to be seen in the Museum of Mexico—an elaborately chiselled block of basalt, nine feet in diameter and three feet in height—which was dedicated by the slaughter of twelve thousand persons! But think, too, of the bigoted iniquity of the Spanish bishop, Zumarraga, who made a bonfire, at the time of the Conquest, of all the picture-writings that portrayed the history of this people—surely the unpardonable sin, and one that looks black even by the side of human sacrifices!

III.

The Conquest, and Development of Independence.

But enough. The sword of the Spaniards brought its sharp change. There is abundant material to be found in every good public library concerning the achievements of the Aztecs; the advent of that adventurer, Cortez, who burned his ships and came to occupy the country; the Conquest and the rule of the viceroys, sixty-four in 286 years; the curate Hidalgo and the ten years' war for independence; the evolution and revolutions that followed; the secession of Texas, and the war with the United States; the remarkable career of President Juarez, and the sequestration of Church property; the intervention of England, France, and Spain in consequence of gross outrages on foreigners; the arrival of the ill-fated Archduke Maximilian of Austria, who was tricked into the belief that Mexico was ready to welcome him, and went to his untimely end like a brave man; the downfall of the Church party, whose final and desperately ventured card the doomed "emperor" was persuaded to play; and, last of all, the establishment of something like a constitutional government.

Thus much for the background. Our purpose is to deal with Mexico of to-day in a candid effort to understand her situation; to portray the elements which make up the problems that she is trying to solve with more or less of intelligence; to consider the relations which her mixed population sustain towards each other and to the State; to examine her social life on both the material and pictorial sides; and, finally, to see what trade conditions exist here, and how all these interests affect the future of a sister republic. The American people are concerned in having a good neighbor on our southern border. The chaotic past has seemed dark enough, but it is believed by impartial students of events that each upheaval has placed the people a little farther in advance; and study confirms this view.

IV.

The Tremendous Drawbacks of the Present.

But while it is fair to say that the national outlook is brighter to-day than ever before, yet just how much this means will be understood only after a preliminary consideration of the country, of the people of to-day, and of the government which is alleged to be theirs. In the effort to create a republic in spirit as well as in name, the statesmen of Mexico labor under tremendous disadvantages. The natural features of the country, and the condition of the people who make up the population of probably 10,000,000, offer nothing like a fair opportunity for building up a government for the people and by the people, whose foundation must be prosperous and self-respecting citizenship.

Three fourths of Mexico is table-land, lying from 6000 to 8000 feet above the sea-level, a great plateau hemmed in by lofty mountains that bar the rains from the coast to the east and west. This immense region, as we have seen, is traversed at its least attractive point by the Mexican Central road to the city of Mexico, and the journey gives the visitor an unfavorable impression of the country. In the early winter the highland presents its best appearance, just after the rainy season of about three months. Still it is evident enough that the absence of water is a most serious detriment to Mexico. Agriculture must mainly depend on irrigation, and for this the streams are comparatively few and small, reinforced now and then by a fresh-water lake. There are spots of surpassing richness, even in the northern half of the country, where streams are found, that show the native strength of the soil. It is claimed that something can be done by using artesian wells, but this does not appear to be practicable. Some fruit-growers also insist that here, as has been demonstrated in California, irrigation is not a necessity. All these things, however, are still in the realm of speculation. The most fertile regions lie on either coast, where the luxuriant fields sink abruptly from the foot-hills to the sea. While Mexico has many exceptionally fruitful agricultural districts, it does not compare, for grazing and growing wheat and corn, with the western United States.

The land is owned in great haciendas or estates, so that land kings often ride an incredible number of miles without reaching the limit of their property. It is argued that these feudal lords retard the progress of the country, particularly as Mother Earth is untaxed, and straitened owners are not thereby forced to sell out. Under such circumstances the cultivation of their immense tracts is often but an indifferent matter. Some of the landlords live abroad and value their estates simply for the cash that can be squeezed out of them. But while the demand that great estates be subdivided is clearly right in intent, and practicable to some extent, the lack of an abundant water supply wherewith to make small holdings tillable will always limit the application of land reform. The right conditions do not exist in a large part of the country for attracting that immigration which is felt to be necessary for the best development of Mexico. Neither is the government in a position to give away valuable land in any quantity. These are most serious drawbacks to all desirable schemes of colonization from the old world.

The special interests of Mexico—mining first of all, the growing of sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee, and tropical fruits—will always draw outside investments, and Americans are bound to put their money in here in one form or another. Each man will believe that his venture is to be the lucky one, and property interests are now pretty well protected.

But substantial social growth must, after all, depend upon the population as it now exists. In considering this the people may be first divided into the two great classes of the rich and poor; and poverty here, as in all tropical countries, is extreme. But this superficial line cuts through a thin top stratum, underneath which the body of the population live their peculiar life. In this docile and capable peasantry lies the reserve power of Mexico. The mass of the people are Indians who resemble in appearance and habits the Zuñi, Pueblo, and Navajo tribes of New Mexico and Arizona. They offer first-class material in the rough, out of which it will be possible with time, patience, and education, to mould an honest citizenship. Their past shows this, though it is by no means literally true, as Charles A. Dana says, that their vices are all of European origin.

John Bigelow sums up the native population in this way: "Of the ten millions of people, fully three quarters are Indians, two thirds of whom cannot read, nor ever had an ancestor who could, who never slept in a bed or wore a stocking, and who are accustomed to live at a less expense per day than a farm horse would cost in any New England state." On the first count, the misfortune of the people can be remedied, and Congress has passed a liberal educational bill to this end. The schools now practically reach only the children of Spanish blood. The Methodist missionaries, who are pursuing sensible methods of work, begin with schools, and they find the natives surprisingly apt at acquiring knowledge. This only confirms what is apparent in the daily bearing of a sober, industrious, ready, and generally honest people. The fact that the Indians do not wear stockings in this hot climate shows their good sense, especially as they all possess huaraches, or leather sandals; that they should occupy beds is not essential; and that, by the use of tortillas, or wafer-cakes made from corn that has been soaked in lime-water, and frijoles or brown beans, the Mexicans can live most economically, is a big point in their favor.

Popular education must do for Mexico what no other agency can accomplish, and foundation work among the native population will yield permanent results by the side of which the desirable but surface policy of subsidies and concessions will appear as tinsel statesmanship.

Until this sure basis has been laid the permanence of existing Mexican institutions can never be insured. The victories of peace have not yet been organized, for the people are only now fully realizing the value of a stable government. The country needs an intelligent middle class to form the backbone of a public opinion such as is now conspicuously wanting, and this must be grown upon the native stock. Here, it will be seen, is a gigantic task, by the side of which the negro problem that confronts the United States looks small indeed.

It has always been said that the ruling class in Mexico are of Spanish and mixed blood. This is still true, though the late President Juarez, the idol of the people, an able lawyer and a remarkable president, was a pure Indian. General Diaz, too, the present able head of the republic, is of native parentage. Juarez was an exception to the general rule, for the great men of this country have usually been soldiers. The educated classes nearly all show Spanish origin, but, as no census has ever been taken, it is impossible to give any figures on this point. When popular education has taken root here the lingering domination of the Spaniards will be weakened, and, in time, mostly broken; for there are great capacities lying dormant in this native population.

The railroads are here, messengers of enlightenment, whose presence stirs the sluggish currents of a life like that of Oriental peoples. They already inspire more progressive methods in business, but they do not touch, in any broad sense, the deepest need of Mexico.

CHAPTER III.

THE POLITICS OF THE COUNTRY.

I.

The States and their Capitals.

Mexico has a well-nigh perfect constitution, her forms of government being modelled after those of the United States. If this instrument could be applied with even approximate fidelity in the twenty-seven states, one territory, and the federal district—an area some sixteen times greater than the state of New York—the result would be a true republic. But it is useless to plunge into a discussion of the politics of the country without some understanding of the local political divisions.

The table which is given below exhibits the states and their populations, with the capitals and their inhabitants. The federal district contains 461 square miles, and that most interesting city, the capital of the nation, boasts some 300,000 people. Upon the 61,562 square miles of the territory of Lower California are settled only about 30,000 inhabitants. The several states are subdivided into 48 departments, 170 districts, 48 cantons, 110 counties, 1411 municipalities, 146 cities, 378 towns, 4886 villages, 872 hamlets, 6 missions, 5869 haciendas, and 14,705 ranches. The use of a map will facilitate study of the following statistics:

STATES.	SQUARE MILES.	POPULATION.	CAPITAL.	INHABITANTS.
Aguas Calientes	2,895	140,430	Aguas Calientes	31,872
Campeche	25,832	86,290	Campeche	15,190
Chiapas	16,048	219,735	San Christobel	8,500
Chihuahua	83,746	180,758	Chihuahua	12,116
Coahuila	50,899	104,131	Saltillo	11,340
Colima	3,743	65,827	Colima	23,572
Durango	42,510	190,846	Durango	27,119
Guanajuato	11,411	788,202	Guanajuato	56,112
Guerrero	24,550	308,716	Guerrero	3,800
Hidalgo	8,163	434,096	Pachuca	12,500
Jalisco	39,168	994,900	Guadalajara	78,600
Mexico	7,838	696,038	Toluca	12,300
Michoacan	25,689	648,857	Morelia	20,400
Morelos	1,776	154,946	Cuernavaca	16,320
Nuevo Leon	23,635	194,861	Monterey	15,300
Oaxaca	33,591	718,194	Oaxaca de Juarez	26,228
Puebla	12,021	704,372	Puebla	64,558
Queretaro	3,207	179,915	Queretaro	27,560
San Luis Potosi	27,500	506,799	San Luis Potosi	34,300
Sinaloa	36,198	167,093	Culiacan	7,878
Sonora	78,021	139,140	Ures	9,700
Tamaulipas	30,225	144,747	Ciudad Victoria	7,800
Tlaxcala	1,620	133,498	Tlaxcala	4,800
Tabasco	11,851	93,387	San Juan Bautista	6,800
Vera Cruz	26,232	504,970	Jalapa	12,400
Yucatan	29,567	285,384	Merida	32,000
Zacatecas	22,998	413,603	Zacatecas	32,000

II.

The Constitution and Congress.

The present constitution bears date of February 5, 1857, with modifications down to October 3, 1883—and it is the great legacy of statesmanship which President Juarez (pronounce Hoo-ärèz) left to the people. He was of and for them, being a Zapotec Indian, of a race that were of the hills, and never had been fully conquered by the Spaniards. In the service of his country, in prison, and in exile, this Indian and lawyer had cherished his dream of a Mexican republic, and nursed implacable hostility to the domination of the Church. The constitution of the first national Congress, adopted in 1812, had declared that the Catholic religion only should be allowed in the State, and that the press, while "free for all purposes of science and political economy, was not free for the discussion of religious matters." When Alvarez was proclaimed president of the republic in 1855, he made Juarez his minister of justice and ecclesiastical affairs. The latter submitted reform laws that were enacted by the Congress of 1856, which body, after deliberating a year, adopted the existing constitution. Juarez "abolished the whole system of class legislation, suppressed the military and ecclesiastical fueros—the privileged and special tribunals and charters of the army and the clergy—and established, for the first time in Mexico, equality of the citizens before the law." The representatives of the people, through the constitutional law, declared not only the right of the citizen to hold any religious views which he chose to adopt, but insured full and free discussion at all points.

Juarez, the prophet and architect of the republic, the man who loosed the bonds of mediævalism, and whose horizon took in a free government, looms up in magnificent proportions. The country which produced him is not now barren of sons with whom patriotism and republicanism are an unselfish passion. Still, a constitution does not make a republic as we know it, nor do patriotic leaders constitute a people who intelligently exercise the right of self-government.

The habit of citizenship has yet to be cultivated by this people, and growth in the use of sovereign rights must rest back on the wider development of popular education. The student of politics in the United States knows that an uneducated people will not avail themselves of the right to vote as a matter of course—many southern states bear witness to this—and the fact is yet more strikingly shown in Mexico.

The Mexican states are independent to the same extent as are those of the United States, and the powers of the federal government are divided into three branches—the legislative, executive, and judicial. Congress consists of the Senate and House of Representatives; there are about 230 members of the latter body, elected for two years, and apportioned at the rate of one member for 40,000 inhabitants; the Senate comprises 56 members, two from each state; congressmen and senators are paid $3000 a year. A president of the Senate is elected each month, and that officer, in case of a vacancy in the presidency, succeeds temporarily to that supreme trust. The law-making body meets annually from April 1 to May 30, and from September 16 to December 16. In addition to this there is a permanent legislative attachment to this government. A fixed committee of both branches, having power to act in all emergencies, sits during the recess.

III.

The Grave Deficiencies in Popular Government.

Mexico is improving steadily, if slowly; but these states after all form but a loosely-knit bond of national life, and Spanish usages in politics render this government essentially a monarchy under ideal republican forms. In theory the people elect the Congress, state legislatures, and the governors of the states. The president is chosen by electors, holds office for four years, and cannot remain in power for two successive terms. This last provision is operative, but that is about all.

Elections are in reality what we should deem a farce. The individual has little sense of personal responsibility, and republicanism exhibits scarcely a healthy infancy as yet. The last general election made barely a ripple of excitement—which was not in itself a bad thing, by the way. Nearly every sign that marks the time of voting in the United States was conspicuously wanting here. There were no public meetings, there was no popular discussion of principles, no weighing of men; no parties exist, as we know them, and there was little voting. The forms are said to have been duly observed, and General Diaz was undoubtedly the overwhelming popular choice for president; but a stranger in Mexico never would have suspected that the people were engaged in the serious business of electing a chief magistrate, who is, in fact, intrusted with the most extraordinary powers.

It seems strange enough to find here little or no public opinion. The hacendado looks after his land with a varying degree of care, and aims to shine in society; the merchants and shopkeepers attend to business, and have their clubs, theatres, and restaurants for evening refuge; and the working people are fully content with getting together enough to live on, if only they find plenty of recreation. Personally no responsibility for the conduct of affairs seems to rest on the voter, and that vigilance which is the price of liberty is not yet the heritage of all classes, and scarcely of any class. "The government" takes charge of all of that, and does its work well or ill according to the character of those who secure or are intrusted with power.

Since 1876 Mexico has had something like a stable government, but in the past an ambitious leader thirsting for power, or a general who wished to lead the people against a too-selfish despotism, has acquired control of affairs through a pronunciamiento and revolution. In fact, now the president is the military head of affairs, and his authority must be maintained by the iron hand of the army. To this end the military establishment receives first consideration in the distribution of funds, and the generals are well housed and must be the trusted friends of the president.

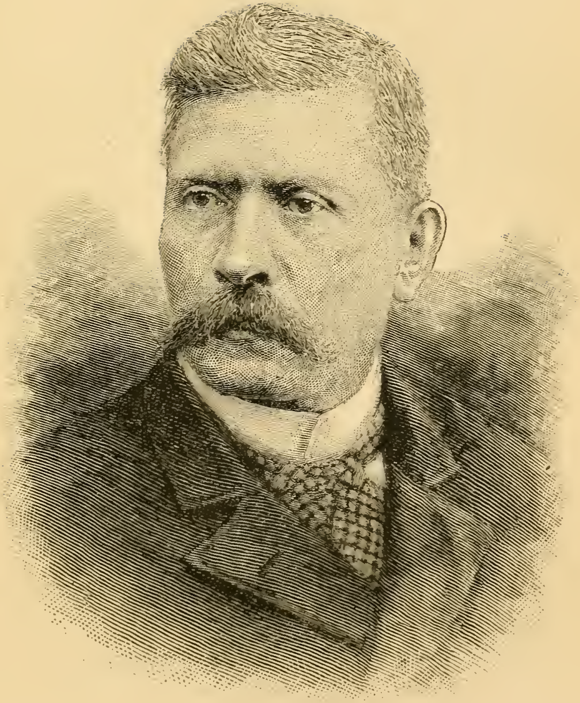
It has been said that there is no free press in Mexico. This sweeping declaration needs to be qualified. The opposition papers indulge in wholesale denunciations rather than facts and arguments, and when they incite sedition the government steps in and sends the editors to jail. But intelligent criticism of public policy and men in office does not appear to be choked off in any unreasonable way.

IV.

The President and his Cabinet.

General Porfirio Diaz is the best-known public man of Mexico, and his reputation abroad is justified by the confidence that is reposed in him at home. His character shines by contrast with the record made by his immediate predecessor in the presidency, Manuel Gonzalez, whose administration leaves no pleasant odor in the retrospect. If any reliance can be placed on the statements of belief made by responsible and respectable residents, the ex-president has accumulated from $3,000,000 to $10,000,000 during his public career, or gathered a fortune which is estimated at about a dollar per head of the people. Favorites of the administration are said to have profited by their opportunities to a degree that could be tolerated only under a government whose lease of power approaches the despotic. It was a good day for Mexico when Diaz succeeded Gonzalez. There has been bitter talk against the ex-president, and this would long ago have led to action of some kind in most countries.

In his private life, too, Diaz is a bright contrast to Gonzalez. The young wife of the president is the daughter of Manuel Romero Rubio, and the alliance strengthened Diaz



PRESIDENT PORFIRIO DIAZ.

with the Church party, while Mrs. Diaz certainly has a very devoted husband. Gonzalez, even when president, had no social position in the city of Mexico, but his reputation for standing by his friends—we have seen the same sort of men in American politics—gave him great political strength. He is now governor of Guanajuato.

President Diaz means well by his country, and is disposed to push a solid and progressive policy just as fast as the mixed conditions by which he is surrounded will permit of advance. He is assisted by a pretty strong cabinet. The minister of foreign relations is Ignacio Mariscal, the most finished diplomat of the country. He is a man of great native ability, who has conducted this department under several administrations, and has also served as minister to England. Manuel Romero Rubio, the president's father-in-law and minister of the interior, is a great lawyer, a polished statesman, a patriot, and a dominant force in the government. Few public men of any country surpass him in tact. Manuel Dublan, secretary of the treasury, is an honest man, who used to be deemed too much of a theorist, but he has proved his capacity for practical work. General Carlos Pacheco, minister of public works, is a friend of American enterprises. The secretary of war is not an important person under a president who is himself a military man. General Pedro Hinojosa, an elderly soldier, now fills the position. Joaquin Baranda is the minister of justice and public instruction.

V.

A Summary of Politics.

Parties, as we know them in the United States, do not exist in Mexico. The postmaster delegate who sat in the Chicago republican national convention of 1884 and said, "I am for the government," expressed in five words the political situation of this country. When the Church party lost power it practically ceased to exercise any influence in affairs. Though it has a silent existence, and its machinations are feared by the government, outwardly the minority make little sign. The real head of the Church party is the archbishop of Mexico, but he never appears on the surface. Outside of the priests it is not easy to name any very distinguished Church leaders. Many old Catholic families retired from politics when Juarez nationalized the property of the Church. They regard themselves as the aristocracy of the nation, and take comfort in looking down on Diaz, who has risen from the ranks of the people. The leadership of the Church party is, therefore, ecclesiastical and aristocratic, and its following comes from the lower orders. The Church maintains its hold on the women to a great extent, but men are seldom seen attending the services.

The tremendous revolution which Juarez carried through when he seized for the government all the monasteries and magnificent Moorish cathedral and church buildings strikes one with amazement. The Spaniards not only established Roman Catholicism, but that religion had come to supersede the worship of the Aztecs in villages where the Spanish language was unknown. Yet the confiscation of all the rich holdings of a most powerful organization is now viewed as an indifferent matter.

It may be added that the party of the Church is not without organization. Smarting under the powerful hand of an antagonistic government, and declaring always the injustice of their despoilment, the Roman Catholic forces in Mexico wait the opportunity to strike at the powers that be. The liberalizing tendencies of modern times have had little play in the Church as it exists here, and priests who come down from the United States do not find a wholly congenial atmosphere among their brethren of the holy orders.

The Liberals perpetuate themselves in power. This is done by the will of the people, despite the fact that the spirit of the constitution is constantly violated. When the public good is held to demand it, certain popular rights are put in suspension. Judged by the standard of a robust and sensitive public sentiment, such as exists in the United States, there can be no defence for many of the methods employed. It seems appalling not to feel at once the indignant protest of a living people interested in the conduct of their dearest concerns. But after a little the Yankee comes to accept the fact that he is abroad, and that it will not do to condemn the men at the head of affairs in Mexico on grounds that would eternally damn an administration at home.

Dealing with a heterogeneous population that is almost wholly uneducated in popular government, menaced by the Church influences, hampered by a State feeling in many quarters that is hostile to the central government, burdened with the extravagance and dishonesty of a previous administration, oppressed by hard times, and knowing, too, that only by the use of the army can order be maintained—these are the conditions that surround President Diaz and his cabinet. The problem has been simplified a little by the presence of the railroads, which enable the central authority to project its troops with rapidity. For this reason ambitious governors are less likely to make trouble now than formerly. In the Congress composed of Liberals there is a demand for reform within the party. The parties in Congress are the Liberal opposition and the government Liberals. The Church party does not appear as such.

President Diaz has yet some time to serve, having assumed office in the year that President Cleveland did, and he is likely to be his own successor, Congress having amended the constitution so as to admit of his immediate reelection. The president is not consistent with himself in this position, but there can be doubt that the business sentiment of the country welcomes the prospect of another term for Diaz. Between Diaz and Gonzalez there is the widest room for preference. Porfirio Diaz cannot be called the Gladstone of Mexico—he is a soldier rather than an all-equipped statesman; he may not be the perfection of unselfishness; but he is admitted to be a patriotic and honest man, loyal to the republic, and ambitious for her prosperity. His past bears no stain of ill-gotten wealth, and his present is full of indefatigable service to Mexico. In any clash between the Gonzalez and Diaz interests the sympathies of Americans are due to the president of the republic and not to his predecessor. They represent types of men that are not unfamiliar to the people of the United States. The irreconcilable conflict that exists between the methods of these men may have to be fought out, but you may be sure that it will not be openly recognized until stern necessity makes no other course practicable. The Liberal party does not dare to divide against itself. Diplomacy is an art dear to the Mexican heart, and it avails much in public affairs.

VI.

Idle Talk of Annexation.

The suggestion that the United States may in time annex Mexico is heard there now and then. In the northern portion of the country this fancy most prevails. The priests see that Roman Catholicism would have a better chance under the toleration of religious opinion that prevails in the

Union than under a government that does not permit a clergyman of that Church to appear on the streets in the garb of his order. The idea of annexation is also favored by a number of wealthy Mexicans who suppose that their property interests would be safer under the protection of the great northern republic.

But all such speculations are idle. There is nothing to tempt the cupidity of the United States, and all moral and public considerations make against adding new race problems to those which now vex us. We attempted to govern the Southern States as military provinces, and failed. At present nothing else would be practicable for Mexico, in case any portion of her territory should be added to "God's country"—for so exiled Americans speak of their home.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND THE RAILROADS.

I.

Primitive Methods in Farming.

DAVID A. WELLS calls this "the poorest country south of Greenland and north of the south pole." Mr. Briggs, ex-chief-engineer of the Mexican Central Railroad, now located in Peru, says that Mexico, which has a population of about 10,000,000, is capable of supporting in comfort 150,000,000 of people. There you have the extremes of opinion, and it is but fair to say that Mr. Briggs knows the country by intimate personal examination, and that he is armed with most interesting details enforcing his views. The truth, however, lies between. Mr. Wells looks at Mexico as she is, belated in the race of nations, and burdened with the worst possible system of taxation, national, state, and municipal; while Mr. Briggs sees her natural possibilities, reckons what Yankee enterprise could accomplish here, and constructs a future on this basis. Both are too ardent, each in his way. On her picturesque side Mexico is unique and unequalled. The material possibilities here, too, are very great—ample, indeed, to pay for working, but hampered by methods not sufficiently advanced to insure a fortune or a good livelihood for every outside seeker. But intelligent effort will tell in this country, as everywhere.

Agriculture has not had a fair chance, for these people usually plough with the sharpened stick, just as was done in

Palestine in Christ's time, and is the practice to-day; but an Illinois plough company have constructed an iron plough as nearly as possible after this local model, and it is creeping into circulation here. That plough strikes deeper, and better results will appear from its use. Perhaps it will be discovered on the high plateaus, where the bulk of the population live, that improved methods will not so wholly depend for results on irrigation. If so, the national outlook will be vastly bettered; but in any event there is ample opportunity here to develop specialties in agriculture. As California has found out that she can gather more wealth in agricultural products than could be obtained by mining, so Mexico may be developed in time. Minister Romero believes that the state of Sonora can be made to produce more wheat than California.

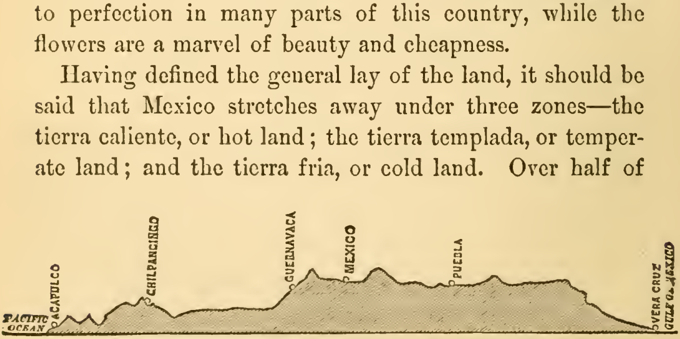
II.

Interesting Crop Statistics.

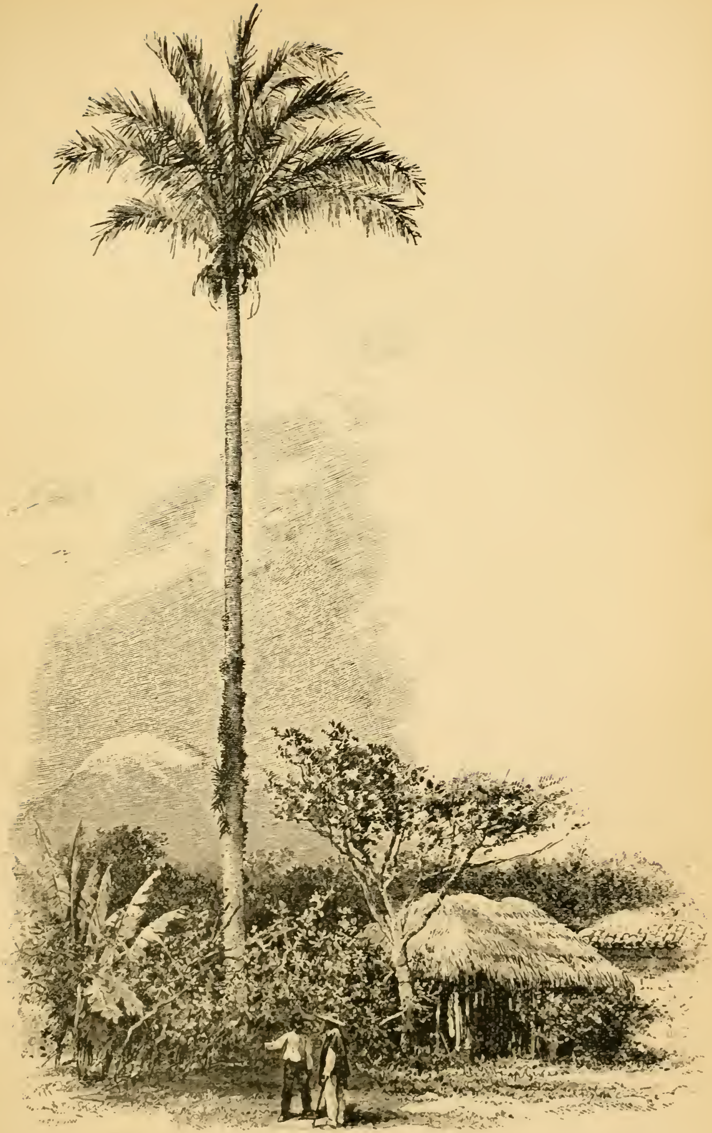
The greatest crop grown is Indian corn, universally used in making tortillas or cakes, the value of the yield being over $112,000,000, about four fifths of the total agricultural product, or in the neighborhood of one ninth the amount raised in the United States. Wheat is the next crop, valued at some $18,000,000; brown beans possibly come next, with a total of half the above sum; sugar and molasses make nearly the same lump sum; the latter crop is estimated in the neighborhood of $7,000,000; while peppers (made into chili, a prime favorite on all Mexican tables) are raised to the extent of $4,500,000. Coffee and tobacco open specially profitable avenues for investment; about $2,000,000 worth each of these necessities of life are now grown. Coffee was introduced into the West Indies about 1714, and it was transplanted to Mexico at the beginning of the present century. It is grown in eight states—Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Tabasco, Guerrero, Colima, Michoacan, and Morelos; the finest variety comes from Colima, and Vera Cruz produces the largest quantity. Every traveller will agree that Mexico serves an excellent article of coffee—the morning solace here as on the Continent.

It may not be generally known that tobacco is indigenous, and derives its name from Tabaco in Yucatan. The weed, called pycietl, was a most comforting adjunct to the halls of the Montezumas before the Conquest. Tobacco is at its best on this its native heath, and no finer cigars are brought from Cuba than can be bought here by an expert smoker. Even the common grades are excellent when compared with the plant produced in the Connecticut valley. Years ago the culture of tobacco was restricted to the vicinity of Orizaba, but now it is grown chiefly in the states of Vera Cruz, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan, Oaxaca, Sinaloa, and Jalisco. There is profit in sugar, and more could be grown to advantage; cotton, too, is cultivated in about half the states, and the plant thrives up to an elevation of five thousand feet. Tropical fruits appear to perfection in many parts of this country, while the flowers are a marvel of beauty and cheapness.

Having defined the general lay of the land, it should be said that Mexico stretches away under three zones—the tierra caliente, or hot land; the tierra templada, or temperate land; and the tierra fria, or cold land. Over half of



TRANSCONTINENTAL PROFILE OF MEXICO.



IN TIERRA CALIENTE.

the country is highland, and comes under the last-named zone; the remainder, usually given as half, but probably nearer a third of the land, is about equally divided between hot and temperate zones. It will be seen that everything can be grown somewhere in Mexico. Thus the hot region furnishes cotton, vanilla, rice, hemp, sarsaparilla, peppers, bene-seed, anise-seed, caoutchouc, cocoa, cassia, oranges, bananas, and all tropical fruits, including original local products—a sort of pumpkin-pie fruit among them. The temperate zone repays the tiller with coffee, sugar, tobacco, cotton, and various vegetables. And in what is called "the cold country" the cereals, hardy vegetables, and the maguey or aloe—what we know as the century plant, of manifold uses, out of which the native liquor is made, together with paper, thread, and cord—are raised. Indian corn, brown beans, and pepper grow in all the states, and wheat in all but five of the twenty-seven states. The rainy season comes in summer, and to take advantage of that the farmer sows in May and reaps in October—gathering two annual crops of wheat and Indian corn in the temperate zone and on the central table-land, unless a too previous frost nips the second venture; while in the states of Vera Cruz, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Tabasco, Mexico, and Jalisco the husbandman plucks his three crops of corn each year.

Many primitive agricultural methods prevail well-nigh universally, and there is little snug farming such as you know in New England. The climatic lassitude infects every process, and the peons or laborers often dawdle and putter in a way that would be wildly exasperating farther north. The first sight of rural life here, indeed, would prejudice some Yankee farmers forever against Mexico. But second thoughts are the best ones. Seeing a thriftless

Mexican thresh his crops upon bare, smooth ground by driving flocks of goats over them does not prepossess the visitor, even though the grain is afterwards washed in the nearest stream. But the shadow of the threshing-machine already falls on the old earth floor, and reapers, mowers, and ploughs are to be found in many sections. Ancestral habit is a tyrant in agriculture, but a new day is dawning upon the ranches in the northern and central part of the table-land. The march of improvement has crossed the border.

III.

The Development of Railroads.

Too much has been expected in Mexico and the United States from the introduction of railroads. The generous government concessions to the new lines were held to be a sort of patent plaster certain to draw Mexico into the front rank of progress. The result has been generally disappointing, but it is not in the least a surprise to any thoughtful person who is at all conversant with the local conditions. This country has made remarkable progress since the new roads entered her borders, and a very decided impetus in all directions has followed. There is more business done, quicker methods are accepted, and Mexicans take kindly to riding on a rail. General Palmer, formerly president of the National road, said that the introduction of the railroads increased the revenues of the government from $18,000,000 to $31,000,000 a year. It is clear that railroads are going to have a profitable career here, but it will have to be on a reasonable business basis. When the railroad people conclude to reckon their subsidies as uncertain, for the present at least, and to count simply on the earning capacity of their property, they will be on a solid basis, and in time on a profitable one, too.

The Liberal party has given most extravagant meaning to its name by granting $126,000,000 in railroad subsidies—a drain of about $7,000,000 a year. This is not only a sum beyond reason, but it is a burden quite out of the power of the government to carry in the present state of its revenues. The fact is that the treasury pays out its collections as speedily as they are acquired, and there are no overflowing coffers under the present abominable system of taxation. The administration feels heavily the burden of hard times. These are more apparent here than in the United States, and any brightening is yet a matter of prediction and not of evidence. One can but feel a strong sympathy with President Diaz in his effort to deal with the harassing problems by which he is surrounded. Gonzalez left an empty treasury, so that the present administration came in under very embarrassing conditions. The new budget voted was largely in excess of the probable revenues, thus necessitating the sharpest kind of economy. The government met the situation by postponing the payment of the subsidies, by cutting the big salaries sharply, and by reducing the general expenses—placing things on that "peace basis" to which Thomas Talbot brought Massachusetts in 1879.

How soon matters can be adjusted so as to permit the complete resumption of subsidy payments is a matter for speculation. Not even the government ministers are able to speak with certainty on this point. The general business outlook warrants the expectation that more than the three per cent. to the Central, and two per cent. each to the National and Mexican roads will be paid during the new fiscal year. Of Mexico's obligation in the premises, President Diaz said in his message:

"The creditors of the nation had a just and indisputable right to demand the payment of the debts owed them in the fulfilment of the contracts concluded with them; but the executive was, at the same time, under the not-to-be-evaded and imperative obligation to care for the preservation of the government, looking carefully to the maintenance of the public power, when the revenues of the nation were not sufficient to meet both demands."

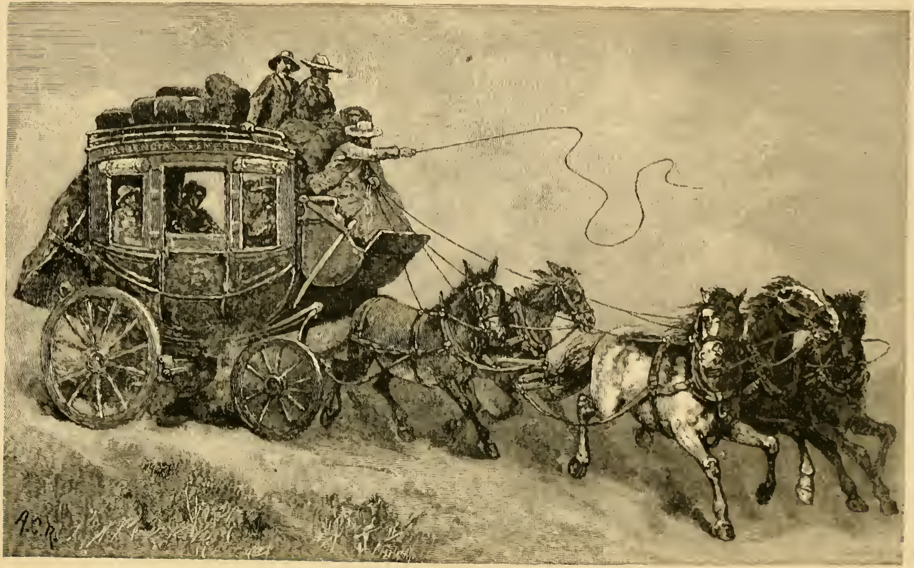
It must be conceded that these words have the ring of truth. However acute Boston's disappointment may be, this was the inevitable outcome of a complicated situation.

IV.

A Review of the Railroad System.

The railroads now in operation enable the tourist to see the country with little personal inconvenience. What was a serious undertaking in the days of the stage-lines and diligences, when the highwayman was not unknown, is to-day comparatively an easy matter. In fact it is no more difficult to visit Mexico than to traverse the western part of the United States, and the journey is in many ways more entertaining and profitable. No one who has crossed the continent should omit to see this civilization, and that speedily. Its distinctive features have not yet yielded much to those universal levelling processes that are making all the world alike. It will be advisable, before going further, to review the Mexican railroad system. All the roads end in the capital city, which is as much a local centre as was imperial Rome.

Down from Texas, riding the backbone of the country, comes the Mexican Central, the only complete trunk line. Its arms are yet to be stretched out, for, under the government concession, a branch must be built to the Pacific and another to the Atlantic. The managers are asking for more time in which to do this work. These branches are



A RURAL "DILIGENCIA."

to traverse a fertile and densely populated region that ought to supply a profitable business. We have seen that railroads are an important assistance to the government in providing quick transit for military purposes, and the authorities are naturally anxious to have these lines available as soon as may be. The year 1885 was a hard one for the Central all around. The road suffered severely from washouts, and it is estimated that $40,000 will be required to replace the track as it was before the rainy season brought disaster. This is certainly a moderate calculation.

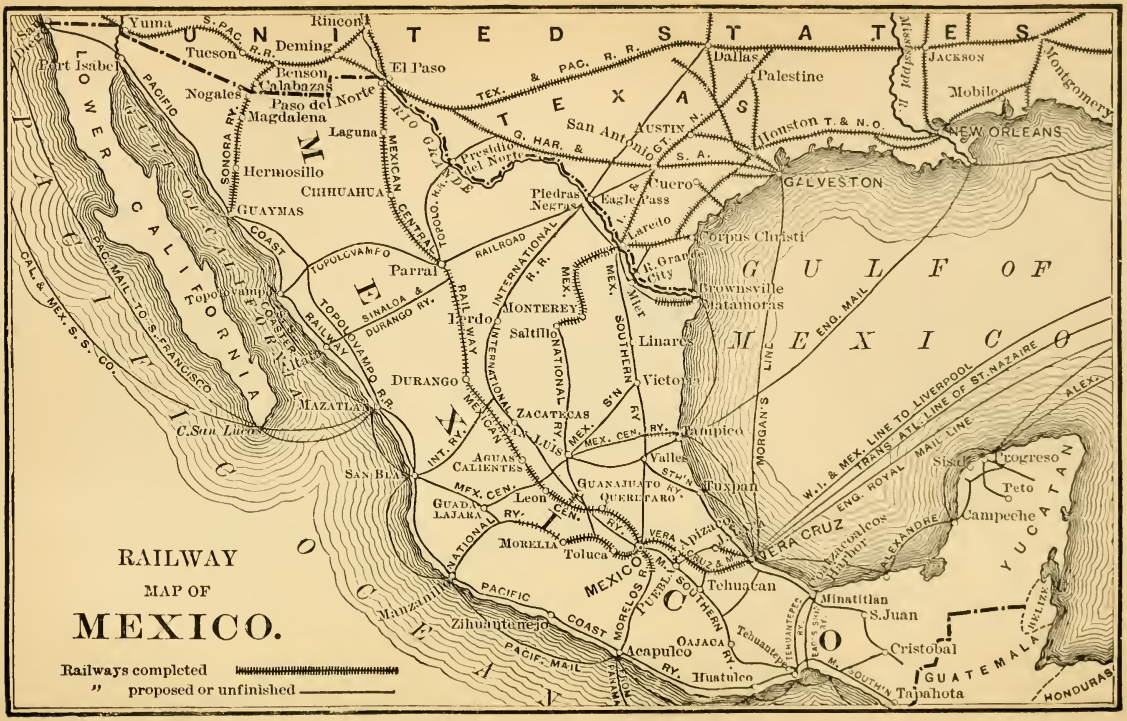
The National road is also a trunk line—on paper; but its northern and main division, running from the city of Mexico to the Texan frontier at Laredo, is yet to be completed. The cost of this will be some $6,000,000, and the line is expected to bring the capital one day and a half nearer New York than it is by the Central. The Pacific division of the National, a splendidly built property, has advanced beyond the city of Morelia, and traverses a most attractive region into the hot country. The Pacific branch of the Central will go through the same territory tapped by the National, but it is doubtful if there will be business enough for both roads. Both will reach Guadalajara, a large city that is famous for its pottery and the manufacture of tiles, and whose people are of a pushing type.

The International road starts from Eagle Pass in Texas and reaches to Monclova; the projected line will go through the Sabinus coal-fields. They are represented as being very rich, and, if so, consumers wait anxiously for their product. It is said that Mr. Huntington, who controls the International, proposes to build southwest so as to strike the Central track at Durango. He could thus furnish Mexico cheap coal, and give a great lift to the iron interests.

The Vera Cruz road extends from the city of Mexico to the old port after which it is named, a distance of 264 miles. This is known as the Mexican railroad, and is a wonder of engineering. It is constructed like an English road, and by the practice of sharp economies the managers of the property have paid their stockholders a four-per-cent. semi-annual dividend. It would be difficult to parallel in any other land the scenery sampled by this railway, rising as it does from the brilliant-hued vegetation of the hot country to the hardier growths and more moderate coloring found at a height of 8500 feet.

The fourth existing railroad is the Interoceanic, whose track was planned to follow straight across Mexico, from the Pacific to the Gulf, as nearly as is feasible, the old trail which was used by the Chinese trade. Before New England civilization had reached the Connecticut River, the old city of Acapulco, which is to be the western terminus of the Interoceanic, was a famous place. Thither came and thence went ships from and to the East, often bearing cargoes valued at $2,000,000. Overland, eastward from Acapulco, the rich freightage was borne by a thousand mules and donkeys to the city of Mexico and the Atlantic port of Vera Cruz, where ships were loaded for Spain. Silks, muslins, and spices, and other Eastern goods were in common use in Mexico two hundred and fifty years ago. The old galleons carried back from Acapulco silver, cochineal, cocoa, and other native products. Nothing more vividly depicts that time than Bret Harte's "Lost Galleon:"

> "In sixteen hundred and forty-one
> The regular yearly galleon,
> Laden with odorous gums and spice,
> India cotton and India rice,
> And the richest silks of far Cathay,
> Was due at Acapulco Bay.



RAILWAY
MAP OF
MEXICO.
Railways completed
" proposed or unfinished
UNITED STATES
TEXAS
MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
GULF OF MEXICO
LOWER CALIFORNIA
GULF OF CALIFORNIA
YUCATAN
GUATEMALA
BELIZE
HONDURAS
San Diego
Yuma
S. PAC. R.R.
Rincon
Tucson
Deming
Benson
Calabazas
Nogales
Paso del Norte
Magdalena
El Paso
Port Isabel
PACIFIC
SONORA RY.
Hermosillo
Laguna
CHIHUAHUA
MEXICAN CENTRAL
RIO GRANDE
GUAYMAS
COAST
Topolovampo
COASTER
Altata
TOPOLOVAMPO
Parral
TOPOLO. R.R.
RAILROAD
TOPOLOVAMPO R.R.
RAILWAY
SINALOA & DURANGO RY.
DURANGO
MAZATLAN
C. San Lucas
PAC. MAIL TO S. FRANCISCO
CAL. & MEX. S. S. CO.
TEX. & PAC. R. R.
Dallas
Palestine
Jackson
Mobile
Montgomery
Mississippi R.
NEW ORLEANS
Houston T. & N. O.
San Antonio
AUSTIN
I. & GT. N.
G. HAR. & S. A.
Presidio del Norte
Piedras Negras
Eagle Pass
Cuero
GALVESTON
Laredo
Corpus Christi
R. Grande City
Brownsville
Matamoras
Mier
INTERNATIONAL R. R.
MONTEREY
MEX. NATIONAL
Lerdo
RAILWAY
Saltillo
INTERNATIONAL
MEX. SOUTHERN RY.
S'N
Linares
Victoria
ENG. MAIL
MORGAN'S LINE
ZACATECAS
NATIONAL RY.
MEXICAN
San Luis
MEX.
MEX. CEN. RY.
Tampico
AGUAS CALIENTES
INT. RY.
SAN BLAS
MEX. CEN.
Valles
STH'N RY.
GUANAJUATO
QUERETARO
Tuxpan
Leon
CEN.
GUADALAJARA
RY.
NATIONAL
MORELIA
Toluca
MEXICO
VERA CRUZ & M.
Apizaco
J.
VERA CRUZ
W. I. & MEX. LINE TO LIVERPOOL
TRANS ATL. LINE OF ST. NAZAIRE
ENG. ROYAL MAIL LINE
ALEX.
Sisal
Progreso
Peto
Campeche
ALEXANDRE
Coatzacoalcos Harbor
Manzanillo
PACIFIC
Zihuatanejo
COAST
MORELOS R.
PUEBLA
SOUTHERN
Tehuacan
Minatitlan
S. Juan
Cristobal
PACIF. MAIL
PANAMA
Acapulco
OAJACA RY.
Tehuantepec
TEHUANTEPEC RY.
EAD'S SHIP RY.
Huatulco
M. SOUTH'N
Tapahota

THE RAILROAD SYSTEM OF MEXICO.

THE ASTOR LIBRARY
NY

* * * * * * * *

The trains were waiting outside the walls,
The wives of the sailors thronged the town,
The traders sat by their empty stalls,
And the Viceroy himself came down;
The bells in the town were all atrip,
Te Deums were on each Father's lip,
The limes were ripening in the sun
For the sick of the coming galleon.

"All in vain. Weeks passed away,
And yet no galleon saw the bay;
India goods advanced in price;
The Governor missed his favorite spice;
The señoritas mourned for sandal
And the famous cottons of Coromandel;
And some for an absent lover lost,
And one for a husband,—Donna Julia,
Wife of the captain tempest-tossed,
In circumstances so peculiar;
Even the Fathers, unawares,
Grumbled a little at their prayers;
And all along the coast that year
Votive candles were scarce and dear."

The Mexican government has been negotiating with the Flowery Kingdom, in the hope of reviving the glory of that ancient commerce.

V.

Novel Features in Railroading.

The railroads of Mexico are largely operated by Americans. The trains of the Central and National lines are manned wholly by men from the States. The Interoceanic is said to be exclusively in the hands of Mexicans, but the engineer on the train by which we passed over that road was unmistakably a bean-fed Boston boy. He was big and good-natured, claimed to be very much in love with this country, and the leisurely progress of his train showed that he had fallen an easy victim to the national spirit.

The expenses of railroading in this hot climate are great. Wooden ties have but a short life, cracking in the dry season and rotting during the rainy months; bridge timber and piles also wear out rapidly. Freight cars must be painted frequently to prevent drying and cracking, and even the substantial Pullman cars shrivel under this exposure. Fuel constitutes a large item of outlay. Mesquit roots are burned on the Central road, pine cut along its route is used on the Interoceanic, and the Vera Cruz company feed their engines coal blocks that are brought from Wales as ballast. The decay of ties will in time necessitate a serious outlay on the Central road, for wooden sleepers cost here $1 each. It is evident that iron ties are a necessity in Mexico, and they are just coming into use. The climate tends to preserve the rails and iron bridges, provided the latter escape the torrents of the rainy season.

Engineers command better wages here than they do in the United States, for only that inducement brings them here. The general staffs of the roads are also well paid, but the section hands, who are peons, work for small wages. The natural and proper tendency on all the roads is to employ Mexicans when the right men can be obtained. This policy helps to protect the property of outside corporations doing business here. The grades on the railroads are something heroic, and the task of constructing road-beds in this mountainous region is often gigantic.

The trains are generally and even generously patronized. Wealthy Mexicans are partial to the Pullman cars, and the second-class conveyances seem to be always filled. It has become the fashion for residents in the interior to visit the capital, since what was before a hard journey is now the work of a day or less, and the hotels and restaurants of the city find their business greatly increased thereby. The freighting traffic with the interior cities is said to be very good, and no place reached by the roads could be induced to give them up. In railroading, as in all other business enterprises here, the arts of diplomacy have a very practical value, and social tact and pleasant and conciliatory methods are essential to the best success. In these lines the Vera Cruz road is handled with adroitness. The Central is also fortunate in having as its local head General-Manager Jackson. He is not only an accomplished railroad man, who knows Mexico through a twenty years' residence, but he is possessed of great tact and social address, and is said to be the finest Castilian scholar in the capital.

It may be said in conclusion of the railroads, that no passenger has ever been injured on either of the American lines, the Central or the National.

CHAPTER V.

TAXATION, MINING, AND MILLS.

I.

How the Business of the Country is Taxed.

Mexico's system of taxation gives point to Senator Vance's story of the verdict rendered by the Dutch justice in North Carolina. One man was charged with having bitten off the nose of another, and the case was but too clear. Just before old Vanderhook was ready to give his verdict, the defendant called him one side. "Look here, old man," he whispered to the Court, "you know I own a mortgage on your house, and the interest is due. You can't pay it. Now, this is business. If you find me guilty of biting that man's nose off, I foreclose to-morrow." Vanderhook resumed his judicial throne, and with imperturbable gravity announced: "De Coort haf found de prishoner nod geelty!" A hundred voices expostulated. "He and I were the only ones in the room, and could it have happened if he didn't do it?" angrily put in the plaintiff. "Shendlemens, hold shust von minute," calmly put in this judicial authority. "De Coort haf decided fer de defendent. De plaintiff says he must haf done it, fer dey wer de only two en de room. De Coort is of opinion that in de hurry of de fight de plaintiff might have bit off his own nose." The performance is one attended with difficulty, but Mexico has done it.

To run the gantlet of taxation—national, state, and municipal—is a very serious matter, and the result is well-nigh fatal to industrial and business enterprise. One or two illustrations will tell the story. The man who bought a stove in St. Louis and brought it into the heart of Mexico paid for just $90.99 worth of experience of the taxation system. The stove and its appurtenances cost $26.50 in St. Louis, and by the time it had reached its destination the figures had grown to over four times the original value —$117.49 being the sum total of the outlay required to secure this article. The miller here has to pay thirty-two distinct taxes before he can get his wheat made up into flour and on the market. Here is a country rich in specialties that could be developed, where the protection idea has run mad, and all hands labor under the impression that the higher the taxes the greater the revenue, and the result is stagnation and a series of official robberies. Real estate practically escapes the tax-gatherer, whose name is legion, and he pounces on every move that can be made in traffic.

II.

The National Finances.

The federal budget for 1886–7—the fiscal year begins July 1—has been reported by President Diaz to the Chamber of Deputies. This is as follows:

Congress	$1,052,144
Executive Department	49,251
Judiciary	434,892
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	419,828
" Interior	3,539,364
" Justice	1,333,696
" Public Works	4,711,771
" Finance	12,004,270
" War and Navy	12,464,500

The above is a reduction of about $3,000,000 over last year's budget; nearly a million dollars will be saved through the reduction in salaries made by this administration, so that about $4,000,000 expresses the economies projected. The total of this new budget is about $36,000,000, and the revenue is uncertain. If business revives the receipts may reach $33,000,000, and the government will aim to restrict the expenditure accordingly.

The custom-houses yield about half the total national revenue; the stamp taxes foot up some $4,000,000, post-offices and telegraph lines $650,000, lotteries $800,000; while the receipts from the states amount to $7,500,000, or about half the sum received from the custom-houses.

The stamp tax is an omnipresent nuisance; it includes stamps for documents and books, for merchandise, and for the internal revenue. Certificates of stock, contracts, titles, tickets of all description—railroad, theatre, and so on—all must bear a stamp; every page of the reports of meetings, each leaf of a merchant's ledger, day or cash-book, or public registers must bear its stamp; and every receipt must be stamped with a one-cent stamp for every $20 or fraction thereof represented. The cigar stores sell these stamps that are necessary to every transaction.

III.

State Levies, and the Combined Burden.

Beneath the federal system every state has its own tax levy, which varies from year to year; the federal tax takes about a quarter of the tax paid to the state, and a resident federal deputy treasurer looks after the interests of the government. In defiance of the federal constitution the protection theory leads states to set up their own custom-house system, levying a state tax on all goods, domestic or foreign, passing their borders; then in turn—and quite as legitimately — the towns assess all goods entering them. Every one doing business must respond to this triple demand, and the total burden amounts to almost a prohibition of trade in the interior, and of course the people suffer for all this aggregated folly. The notion of protecting home industry is thus carried to exasperating absurdity. The merchant who brings in a stock of cloth pays a state tariff, and then the town levies again at the rate of nine per cent. of what the state has exacted. All industries pay the town a monthly fee; each beef animal leaving town is taxed fifty cents, every pig twenty-five cents, and so on; and on entering another town the same plundering process is repeated. All this has been going on for years without number, and is a legacy of Spanish domination.

Not the least of the many duties that confront the progressive element in this country is the absolute necessity that exists for lifting this antiquated yoke of taxation off from the shoulders of the people. This cannot be done at once, for state and local interests are not readily fused into a sound and strong national life. The instinct of self-government is too generally rooted in ancient and unprogressive customs that are the legacy of mediævalism, and federal union as we practise it must be a growth dependent on the slow rallying of many fundamental modern forces. To slay the army of petty tax-gatherers who are commissioned by the state and local authorities, and to assess as we do real estate and personal property, to reach the rich land owners, and to prevent this oppression of the poor, is a task as delicate as it is gigantic. Our attempt to reform the civil service of the United States is as nothing beside it. We can confidently appeal to the good sense of an intelligent, united body politic; but to disturb with haste this universal inequity of Mexican taxation would be to precipitate revolution and bloodshed, and those most to be benefited by the reform would be early in arms. The truth is that these people do not yet know the a, b, c of their wrongs.

IV.

Mining in the Past and Present.

The precious metals were mined and held in high regard in Mexico before Columbus set foot on the shores of the new continent. When Cortez landed, and Montezuma looked on his coming with superstitious fear, the native monarch sent to meet the advancing adventurer gold and silver gifts of such richness and deftness of workmanship that the cupidity of the Spaniards was inflamed to brutal ardor. Bernal Diaz, one of the invaders who afterwards returned to Spain and wrote a history of the Conquest, tells of the various embassies: the first bore "a quantity of gold trinkets of beautiful and skilful workmanship;" another deputation was accompanied by one hundred Indian porters laden with presents. Diaz wrote of "a round plate, about the size of a wagon-wheel, representing the sun, the whole of finest gold, and of the most beautiful workmanship, a most extraordinary work of art," etc.; also of "a round plate even larger than the former, of massive silver, representing the moon, with rays and other figures on it, being of great value;" again of a "casque, completely filled with pure grains of gold, as they are found in the mines;" and of "thirty golden ducks, exactly resembling the living bird, and of splendid workmanship," and so on. Indeed, it has been said that Cortez sent back to the king of Spain some seven million dollars' worth of gold and silver prior to his battles with the Aztecs; but these figures have been greatly reduced by the most careful writers.

The evidence is pretty conclusive that the native mining had been extensive, fairly scientific, and very profitable. Humboldt estimated that the gold and silver yield of Mexico from 1521 to 1804 amounted to $2,027,952,000; it is believed that from 1804 to 1848 the total product of the mines was at least $768,188,420; while from 1848 to 1885 the mines have yielded in the neighborhood of $1,250,000,000, or enough to make the total production of Mexico since the Conquest above $4,000,000,000!

It is dazzling to play with lump sums like this, and in view of the inadequate methods that prevail in many mining districts of this country it would not be difficult to make glittering predictions about the money that is to be realized in mining. But such sort of writing is wildly delusive. There is undoubtedly mining property that can be worked to advantage, and some forty American companies are developing their ventures at this time. Each hopeful investor is confident of the result, and let us hope that success may crown all; but the work is not prosecuted here under so favorable conditions as are found in the United States, and prizes are not abundant thus far. Many mines have been sunk until they filled with water, and then abandoned—some of these notably rich ones; but expensive machinery, large capital, and time are required to work such enterprises to advantage. The supply of silver is now chiefly derived from the mines of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Sombrereto, Catorce, and Pachuca. The mining laws are commended by those familiar with them, but I notice that most American owners take the precaution to retain as counsel the chief local, state, or municipal official, thus securing special privileges and ample protection. Foreign companies, indeed, are allowed advantages that native owners do not obtain. The mines are in the hands of individuals and not of the government, but neglect to operate a property for four months in the year forfeits it. The mine is then "denounced," escheats to the government, and is sold at auction. The Mexican Central Railroad passes through the city of Zacatecas, a famous mining centre, and the tourist can advantageously begin his study of the mining interests at that point.

V.

The Advantages of Reciprocity.

Mexico's exports are $43,000,000 a year, and her imports are about $40,000,000. The government presents no table of imports, and this calls attention to a lack that constantly confronts one. The statistics are poor. There is nothing approaching our census system, and it is discouraging to discover that the same figures have been on the boards for a suspiciously long period as stock actors. The statement that places the population at ten millions is not the result of a personal enumeration, and estimates of the size of the cities vary greatly; in fact, the guess-work that enters into all these matters is so very considerable as to make definite writing next to impossible. Still, by picking such figures as the known facts and the probabilities favor, a pretty accurate general picture may be painted.

Those well informed with regard to trade interests agree that a great deal of smuggling exists, owing to the high tariff and the great frontier stretch that invites law-breaking. It is said that millions more of American goods find their way into Mexico than show in the statistics prepared by either government.

No one can escape the feeling that the trade of Mexico belongs to the United States by right of propinquity, and the natural highway opened upon the table-lands between the two republics—which led Baron Humboldt to say early in this century, of the line now traversed by the Central road, that "four-wheeled wagons can travel from Mexico to Santa Fé." Then, too, Mexico and the United States complement each other—the one furnishing tropical products of every variety, and the other standing in obvious need of a wider market for her farming implements, mining machinery, wagons, paper, clocks and watches, and the thousand and one articles of invention that fill the American mills and warehouses. Something of what India is to England, Mexico could be and ought to be to the United States. It may be added that while Germany, England, and France have so long largely held the trade of Mexico, they all look with apprehension upon the proposed reciprocity treaty, and some of the largest German merchants in the city of Mexico admit that the advantages for the future are indisputably with the United States. Indeed, to such men the delay of Congress in ratifying the treaty is simply unaccountable. They entertain hearty contempt for a House of Representatives that can dawdle over passing political legislation and neglect an opportunity to secure a national advantage which is to be had for the taking.

VI.

General Features of Business.

The business of the country centres in the city of Mexico. It is noticeable that the large houses are conducted by foreigners. The great wholesalers or merchant princes are Germans, with a few English houses. It is interesting to note, also, that the Americans are beginning to press the Germans on hardware and miscellaneous goods, and that our manufacturers are hurting the large and profitable English trade in agricultural implements. There is no reason why the local prejudice against improved machinery should not fade away before the intelligent pushing of our goods.

It is a fact, however, that this trade must be specially and patiently catered to. Continental business methods prevail, necessitating a courtesy and diplomacy that are not always easily acquired by your brisk and impudently pushing Yankee of the commercial-traveller stripe. Thus, the German agent drops in at the office of the Mexican, chats about affairs and inquires with particularity after the welfare of the person addressed and that of his family, smokes a cigarette or cigar in pleasant unison with his victim—and departs without having broached the matter of business. The Mexican buyer is entertained, and invites his caller to drop in again. Thus, by gradual approaches, is a sale consummated, for time is no object here. The Yankee who brings his "samples," opens with blustering talk about business, and appears always in haste "to catch the next train," is a dead failure. He is regarded with suspicion, if not irritation.

The matter of freighting, too, is an important item. Mexicans are never in a hurry for anything, and slow transportation does not disconcert them in the least. Foreign houses also take special pains in putting up goods to add no unnecessary weight, while Americans pack in thick wooden boxes that are an unnecessary incubus when goods are shipped for the interior, and often have to be transported by mule-power. When the reciprocity treaty goes into effect the American merchants will have some things to learn before they can fully command here the market that is their natural right. The Mexican merchant wants a price given that will include freights and tariff—that is, what the goods will cost delivered. He puts off all possible personal bother. He is good pay, but is often slow in settling up. Bradstreet's has an agency in the city, and the standing of any customer can be readily ascertained in New York.

VII.

Facts about the Retail Trade.

The important retail stores of the city — dry goods, jewelry, and so on — are kept by Frenchmen, and French names abound on the principal shopping avenue of the city. Americans do not go into retail business, but act as commission merchants. The large hotels and restaurants are conducted by Italians and Frenchmen. Banking institutions are managed by Spaniards, Germans, and a few are in the hands of Englishmen. There is said to be room here for a branch of some large New York or Boston banking establishment. The petty retail trade naturally falls into the hands of the Mexicans, but old-country Spaniards are also engaged in it in a larger way. They are thrifty and economical, and come over bent on money-making. Until the Central Railroad was opened all the better class of paper came from France and Belgium, while the coarser qualities were made here. There seems to be a particularly good opportunity for placing in the capital city fine Connecticut valley stationery and book-paper. At present the German fancy stationery takes the lead because it is so neatly put up. American firearms are bought at the border by those who want a reliable article, but it appears that Spanish makers imitate American pistols and revolvers, even to the brand. This is true in particular of Colt's make. The finest of the new buildings are being finished with American wall-papers, which are deemed better than those of French manufacture. I am assured, too, that American machinery is making its way, though much that is sold comes from France and England.

It is a fact that some of the German wholesalers here are so discouraged over the prospect as to talk of retiring from the field, for they believe that the Americans are bound to come to the front. But they must occupy the field honestly. These merchants from the Continent bring with them an old-fashioned solidity, and shoddy is never tolerated among them. The shops of Mexico would not discredit New York or Boston, and the Mexicans know the best. To send dishonest or clumsy goods here is simple folly—and it has been indulged in by American houses that know less about Mexico than they do of the Sandwich Islands. In the shop-windows may be noted many articles of American make, even the German merchants displaying our lamps, which surpass their own in finish and artistic quality. The American commission merchants located here talk sensibly about the future. They have learned much, have camped out to do business, and are succeeding. The American sewing-machine is here, while our life-insurance companies have a monopoly of this field.

Stores and houses are only taxed when rented, each householder thus paying to the municipal government a certain percentage on his lease. This is another mesh in the abominable network of taxation that is directed with a view to oppressing the people at every possible point.

VIII.

The Mills and their Operatives.

Manufacturing is an old story, for the Spaniards found that cotton-cloth had been made long before their advent—perhaps it was produced in Mexico as early as in any country on the globe. Artistic bed-curtains, and cloth in figures and colors representing animals and flowers, were among the achievements of that early civilization. The government makes every effort to nurse the mills of the country in the way of a bonus for starting and protectionary duties, but nature is the great opposing power. Manufacturing can never prosper naturally, because of the paucity of water and fuel; and when it is stated that the wood used in firing the furnaces of mills costs $15 a cord, the situation explains itself. Not even the great cheapness of labor can overcome an obstacle like this. Steam is therefore little used in the factories, and the water-power is all too limited for any extensive development of manufacturing. This is to the direct advantage of the United States. The number of factories of all kinds in the republic is given at about one hundred; they are valued at nearly $10,000,000, employ in the neighborhood of 13,000 hands, and contain 250,500 spindles and 9500 looms.

The range of manufacturing covers cotton and woollen goods, the coarser paper, flour, hats of felt and straw, leather work of all kinds, palm-leaf work — matting, baskets, brooms, and brushes; silk, furniture, glass, and rope; besides sugar, chocolate, indigo, pottery, and tiles, which are peculiar to the country. The Hercules Cotton-mill at Queretaro—the capital of the state of that name, and one of the chief cities on the Mexican Central Railroad—is the largest enterprise of the kind in the country. It cost $4,000,000, employs 1400 operatives, is the property of the Rubio family, and produces an immense quantity of manta, or the unbleached cotton which is universally worn by the Indians.

Mill hands average about $4.50 per week of sixty hours, while the bosses are paid from $9 to $25 a week. The average cost of living to the laborers in the cities is estimated at about 25 cents a day; in the country these men live on from 12½ to 18 cents a day. The mill operatives live more expensively, and many of the superintendents and bosses are Europeans, who command what we should esteem reasonably good wages. The workers of all kinds, including those employed in the factories, display very little forehandedness; present food and amusement serve to keep out the hope or desire for a better future. Still, the intelligence, orderly habits, and pleasant manners of the employees of the cotton-mills, sugar-houses, and even the mines, must favorably impress the visitor.

There are profound possibilities in this peasant class that will some day command recognition. This race, that can subsist decently on 25 cents a day, enters the industrial field with an equipment that must tell in time, and that on their native soil where no race antagonisms can interfere with their progress.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

I.

The Charm of Popocatapetl.

Berkshire's Greylock Mountain in Massachusetts would make a baby foot-hill for old Popocatapetl, the volcano of our school-books, the highest peak of Mexico, the heroic, snow-crowned monarch of this northern continent—the one 3505 feet above the sea-level, and the other estimated by Humboldt at 17,716 feet, and reckoned by later authorities at 18,362! This city is itself some 3000 feet higher than Mount Washington, on whose summit the signal observers remain in winter at the risk of their lives. We are in the latitude of the desert of Sahara, but the elevation not only makes life endurable, but imparts its own delicious and novel zest. The valley of Mexico is encircled by a noble framework of mountains, of which the hills that are round about Williamstown, Mass., are a not dissimilar miniature. But this picture is extended, and seen in the rarefied atmosphere of the upper regions—a mighty canvas in worthy setting.

The valley and plain lies in the form of an ellipse, some 45 miles long by 30 broad, and is bounded by irregular mountain ridges and volcanic peaks that loom up to a height of from 12,000 to over 18,000 feet; the two dominant summits, Popocatapetl and Iztaccihuatl (the White Woman) are covered with perpetual snow. These two command the attention of the tourist on his entrance into the city, and they chain it to the day of his departure. Rosy with the morning light, golden with the glow of evening, or cool and restful under the hot, midday sun—the marvel of every change, the centre of each scene, the eternal inspiration of the landscape—one looks forever towards "the hills from whence cometh our strength." No accessible section of the United States yields impressions so grand or so lasting as they produce; none of her mountains are comparable in kingly dignity with these.

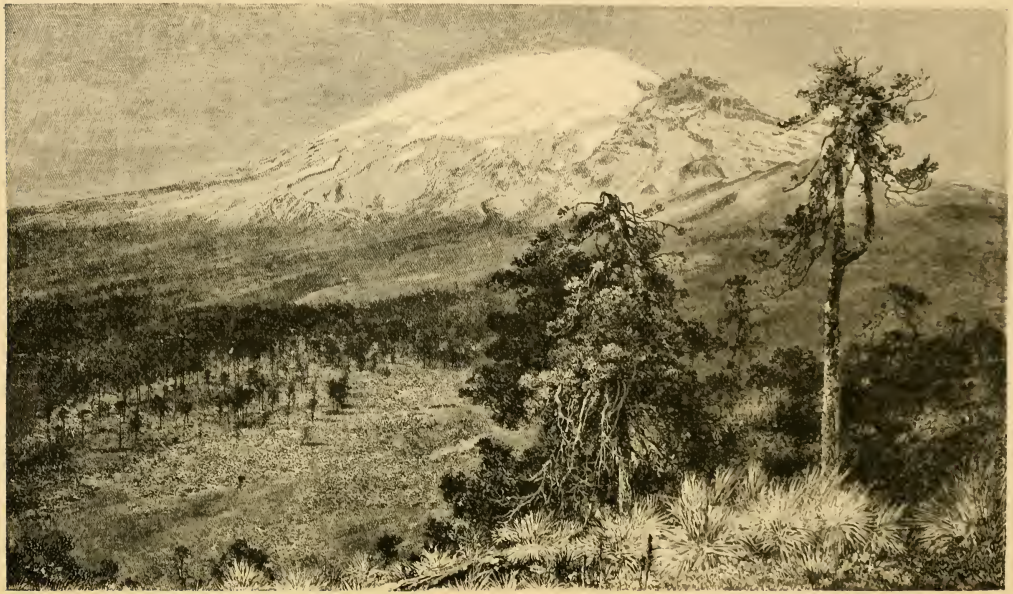
II.

Valley, Lakes, and City.

The alluring scene that opened before the Spanish conquerors when, on their march to the Aztec capital, they paused on the summit between these two volcanic mountains, is thus depicted by Prescott:

> "Its picturesque assemblage of water, woodland, and cultivated plains, its shining cities and shadowy hills, was spread out like some gay and gorgeous panorama before them. In the highly rarefied air even remote objects have a brilliancy of coloring and a distinctness of outline that seem to annihilate distance. Stretching far away at their feet were seen noble forests of oak, sycamore, and cedar; and beyond, yellow fields of maize, and towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens; for flowers, in such demand for their religious festivals, were even more abundant in this populous valley than in other parts of Anahuac. In the centre of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present; their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets; in the midst—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls—the fair city of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples reposing, as it were, on the bosom of the waters, the far-famed 'Venice of the Aztecs.'"

The outlines of the picture are the same now as then, but the details are changed somewhat; the invaders stripped the valley of its forests, until only the stately and magnifi-



POPOCATAPETL.

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cent grove of Chapultepec remains. The lakes number six, the largest being Texcoco, which has received the overflow of the others. Its water is salt, the highest body of the kind in the world. Two of these lakes are of fresh water, and must be about as high as the great body of water in Yellowstone Park. In this level valley one sees little of the lakes, unless journeying out of the city, but ducks without number, visitors from the North, flutter over their surface at this season, and invite the sportsman to his work of destruction.

The ancient capital was destroyed by that ruthless vandal, Cortez, and he was short-sighted enough to rear the modern city on the old site, when the rebuilding ought to have been done on higher ground. There was plenty of such available. The mistake was recognized in Spain, but too late, and it involved an expensive system of causeways and dikes that did not suffice their purpose, as five great inundations, the last in 1634, attest.

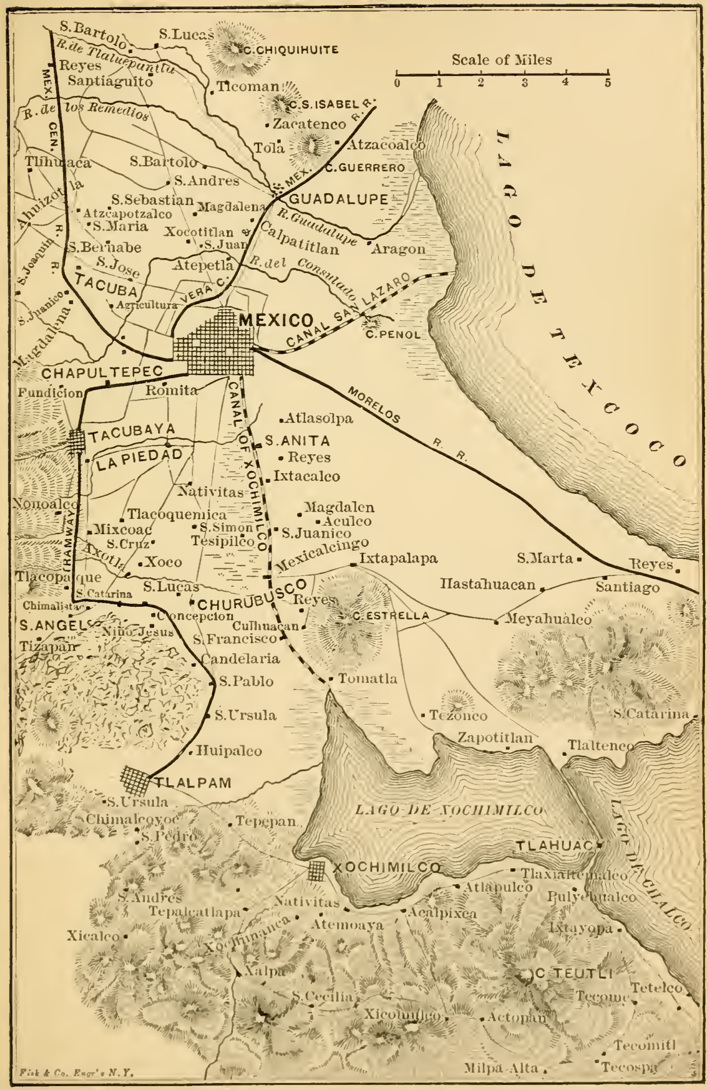
That blunder is to-day the chief drawback to this beautiful capital city, which has a population of over 300,000 and is about the size of St. Louis. The Aztec superstition that led them to build in a swamp may be pardoned, but the folly of Cortez admits of no palliation. To him must be primarily attributed a death-rate double that of Boston, and mostly due to filth diseases. The people have been strangely slow on their part about introducing an adequate system of drainage, though Congress has at last passed the legislation necessary to carry out one of the many propositions to this end that have long been considered. Thorough drainage will make this city one of the most attractive places in the world.

This is classic America, the home of the original Western civilization. Here are new places and new sights; an equable and salubrious winter climate, above fogs and out of the range of storms; a state of society equal in picturesqueness to any that the Old World can offer; a scenery grand with mountains, gorgeous with luxuriant vegetation, and beautiful with a wealth of flowers so lavish that calla-lilies lie unplucked in the swamps—and all to be seen under a sky like that of Italy, and enjoyed from a city where one can be as well cared for as in Washington or Paris. This little Europe at our doors entails no sea voyage, and the journey thither is made with less discomfort than would be experienced on the Continent.

III.

The Plaza Mayor and Noble Cathedral.

All the Spanish-American cities are laid out on the same plan. The wide-paved streets cross each other at right angles and terminate in a great square or plaza. This contains always the church or cathedral on the one side, and on the other the government building or palace. To command a bird's-eye view of the city of Mexico it is customary for the tourist to begin his observations at the Plaza Mayor, the great central square, by ascending the tower of the cathedral. We are but following the habit of long ago, for this was the site of the Aztec teocalli, or temple of sacrifice, up whose steps Montezuma led Cortez, and, taking him by the hand, pointed out the beauties of the city that the Spaniard was to make desolate. This is indeed historic ground, for the view that we are soon to enjoy will call up chapter after chapter from the past—local figures without number, and some that will touch us more nearly, for Scott and Worth, and Lieutenant U. S. Grant, and the ill-fated Maximilian played their parts here within easy sight from the tower; and on this great square, too, where once entered Cortez


Scale of Miles
0
1
2
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S.Bartolo
S.Lucas
C.CHIQUIHUITE
R. de Tlalnepantla
Reyes
Santiaguito
MEX. CEN. R. R.
Ticoman
C.S.ISABEL
R. de los Remedios
Zacatenco
Tola
Atzacoalco
Tlihuaca
S.Bartolo
C.GUERRERO
S.Andres
MEX.
GUADALUPE
Ahuizotla
S.Sebastian
Magdalena
Atzcapotzalco
S.Maria
R. Guadalupe
Xocotitlan
Calpatitlan
Aragon
S.Juan
S.Bernabe
S.Joaquin
S.Jose
Atepetla
R. del Consulado
TACUBA
VERA C.
CANAL SAN LAZARO
S.Juanico
Agricultura
MEXICO
C.PENOL
Magdalena
LAGO DE TEXCOCO
CHAPULTEPEC
Fundicion
Romita
CANAL OF XOCHIMILCO
MORELOS R. R.
Atlasolpa
TACUBAYA
S.ANITA
Reyes
LA PIEDAD
Ixtacalco
Nativitas
Nonoalco
Magdalen
Tlacoquemica
Aculco
TRAMWAY
Mixcoac
S.Simon
S.Juanico
S.Cruz
Tesipilco
Mexicalcingo
Axotla
Xoco
Ixtapalapa
S.Marta
Reyes
Tlacopaque
S.Lucas
Hastahuacan
Santiago
S.Catarina
CHURUBUSCO
Reyes
Chimalistac
Concepcion
C.ESTRELLA
Meyahualco
S.ANGEL
Niño Jesus
Culhuacan
Tizapan
S.Francisco
Candelaria
S.Pablo
Tomatla
S.Ursula
Tezonco
S.Catarina
Zapotitlan
Tlaltenco
Huipalco
TLALPAM
LAGO DE XOCHIMILCO
S.Ursula
Chimalcoyoc
Tepepan
LAGO DE CHALCO
S.Pedro
TLAHUAC
XOCHIMILCO
Tlaxialtemalco
S.Andres
Atlapulco
Nativitas
Pulyehualco
Tepalcatlapa
Acalpixca
Xicalco
Atemoaya
Ixtayopa
Xochimanca
Xalpa
C.TEUTLI
Tetelco
S.Cecilia
Tecomic
Xicomulco
Actopan
Tecomitl
Milpa Alta
Tecospa
Fisk & Co. Engr's N.Y.

ENVIRONS OF THE CITY.

and his army, General Winfield Scott massed his victorious soldiers in 1847.

But no traveller ever ascends the tower, be his resolution ever so strong, without first examining with more or less care this largest cathedral of North America, and one of the grandest buildings to be seen anywhere. The edifice, begun in 1573, was nearly a hundred years in process of erection, being completed in 1667 at a cost of little less than two millions of dollars. Its symmetrical and reposeful architecture was after the best plans that Spain could offer; it occupies the northern side of the square, is of the form of the cross, 426 feet long, 200 wide, and 175 feet high at the dome, and its massive twin towers rise to an altitude of 200 feet.

The vast interior effect is solemnizing, though its splendid ornamentation has suffered from a long series of plunderings. The high altar, once the richest in the world, is yet a most imposing mass of dazzling gilding, though the candlestick of gold that one man could not lift, its golden chalices and pyxes studded with precious stones, and the golden censers, crosses, and statues have mostly fallen a prey to heretic and knavish hands. The decline of the Church is sadly evidenced here.

There are five naves, six altars, and fourteen chapels, and here, too, are the bones of some of the departed viceroys and great men of Mexico, among them the remains of Emperor Iturbide. He was Colonel Augustine Iturbide in 1820, who joined with Guerrero to declare the independence of Mexico in 1821, and the next year had himself proclaimed emperor; Santa Anna led the people against this usurper, whose "reign" lasted nine months, and who was shot under sentence of the new government in 1823. The palace of the "emperor" is now a favorite hotel. But this has taken us out of the cathedral and back over the years, for the temptation to digression lurks in every nook and cranny of this rare old town. There are paintings on these walls that invite to careful study, some of them credited to Murillo. This has been a treasure-house of costly art, for the Roman Catholic Church exacted the best that Mexico could produce, and it was rich enough to command the choicest productions of Spain and of China. The missing statue of the Assumption was of gold, ornamented with diamonds, and is said to have been valued at $1,090,000. What is told of the ancient glory of this cathedral reads like a chapter from the "Arabian Nights," and what is still here surpasses the decorations in any American cathedral or church.

This is a superb memorial of that time when the power of the Church was expressed by the fact that she possessed two thirds of the entire wealth of Mexico. The great cathedral is always open and priestly ministrations continue; but it is no longer a national shrine, the kneeling worshippers are women, with here and there a battered and tattered ancient male Indian figure. The men of the army and of affairs seldom or never come in hither. Outside of these doors the priest must doff all evidences of his calling, and even then he is not always free from insult. To such extreme lengths has the national reaction proceeded that even this ancient cathedral—begun about a century before the Pilgrims landed in New England—is occupied by the Roman Catholics only by the sufferance of the liberal government. It is against the law for the Church to hold property, and it can acquire it only through individual decoys and by stealth.

IV.

A Bird's-eye View of the Town.

But let us to the tower view. A pull at the door causes it to open as by magic, persuaded by a rope wielded from the tower, and we toil up the stone steps until they seem never-ending, like the ascent of Bunker Hill or Washington monuments. Near the top a woman keeper, who is surrounded by the usual Mexican brood of children, extracts a fee of one real ($12\frac{1}{2}$ cents). The picture that lies at our feet as we pass under the ancient bell with its dim dedicatory inscription, and to the front of the tower balcony, is royal in extent and fascinating in detail. The environment, that we already know, is without an equal that I ever read of; and the city is here seen at its best. It stretches away all about us, its limits equidistant in every direction. for this is the very heart of the town.

This is no semi-savage city, but a splendid capital easily comparable with the finest cities of Europe; it recalls many, but repeats none, and the Eastern color that characterizes the local life gives it a hint of all peoples and every land. For a mile away stretch the flat roofs, and the domes of churches are so frequent that one tires of counting them. The sun glares with blinding brilliance through the thin air, and each object within the range of the vision stands out with the sharp outline of the silhouette.

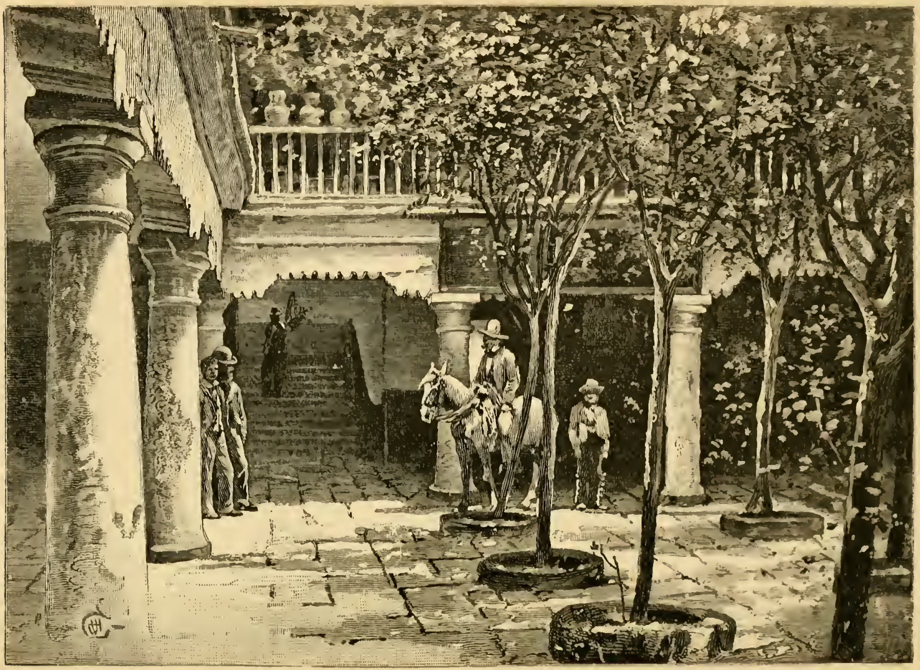
After sweeping the rampart of mountains the eye narrows the circle and surveys the homes of the people. The houses are built in squares or blocks six hundred feet in length, with solid walls and flat stone roofs, all apparently after the same pattern, and each dwelling around a patio or court that is open to the sky. Thus is each man's house in a peculiar sense his castle. The great doorway from the street is always attended by a porter who lives perpetually on guard in the lower court. This is flagged with stone and surrounded by the stables and quarters of the servants. Above are usually two ranges of living and sleeping-rooms, fronted by corridors and ornamented by iron balustrades. Very often a fountain plashes in the court that the day fills with sunshine, flowers and vines trail in a luxuriant network up and down the balconies, and palms lend their deep green for a groundwork. Above the house the roof-top, or azotea, offers an evening retreat that is fanned by cool breezes and curtained by the far-away sky. So pleasant and attractive and individual is the home-life of Mexico, it is said that Mexican girls seldom care to wed foreigners who would take them away from this city of their adoration. Do you wonder at it?

Sensible girls, indeed, are these!

V.

Features that Individualize the City.

We are fronting to the south. Below, in the centre of the square, is the Zocalo, or pleasure-garden, glowing green in the near landscape of stone; in its centre is a music-stand, where the military bands often play; and disposed about in artistic harmony are tall trees, flowers, and statues. Near at hand is the city flower-market, a graceful iron structure, where the spoils of this eternal summer are brought each morning from all the region about—the pleasantest spot in the city, for such blossoms are not known to your sordid Northern soil, and they are as cheap as they are profuse. A mass composed of all the flowers you know, such as would cost at least $10 in the United States, may be had for half a dollar, or for 25 cents if the buyer be anything of an expert at dickering. The visitor can luxuriate in



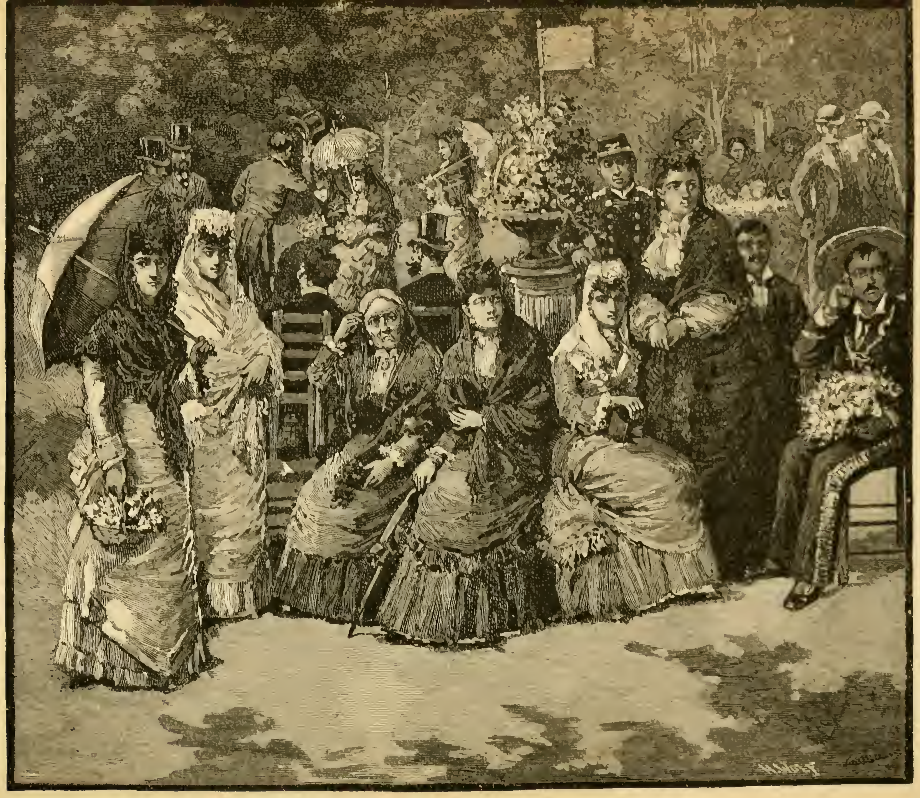
INTERIOR COURTYARD OF MEXICAN RESIDENCE.

flowers and yet not be extravagant, according to your standards.

But all this while the life of the city has swirled and eddied below us. Across the square and fronting north is the municipal palace, or the building occupied by the local government. An arcade supports its first story and shelters within and without a long array of shops and traders that continue around the square to the west. The feminine beauty and fashion of the city is to be encountered there during these morning shopping-hours, and it is worth seeing. The ladies are in black, and the mantilla is much worn on shopping expeditions, that bewitching device for heightening the effect of an olive, velvety skin and glorious eyes. It is not safe to presume that these visions of beauty do not understand English, for here as in the United States acquirement is more general among the young women than with the young men, and the tourist who involuntarily exclaimed when the vision of the acknowledged beauty of the city burst on him around a corner detected an amused twinkle in her flashing eyes. To stare at a pretty girl here is to pay her a high compliment, which is one of the fortunate provisions of the country. It is a pity that Paris fashions are now the rage, for the Spanish costumes are being crowded to the wall.

The eastern boundary of the square is occupied by the national palace, the largest building in Mexico, a low marble structure, said to be 700 feet long, with no pretensions to architectural grace, but possessing a solid dignity not always appreciated by those wonted to its outlines. The inside features are striking and various. Here is where the Senate meets, the cabinet officers have their quarters, and the administration is at home—the House of Representatives gather in a dingy theatre in another part of the city—and here is the great ambassadors' hall, 310 by 30 feet, with a throne at the southern end for the president and his cabinet; here are Maximilian's state coach, the meteorological observatory, a botanical garden, the national museum, the treasury of the nation and its archives, the soldiers, and so on. We have but space to hint at attractions that should be given more intimate attention. An important building on the west side of the square is the big government pawn-shop. This completes our swift circuit of the plaza.

In the western part of the city lies the Alameda, the forest garden of the capital, older than the Zocalo, which latter I believe unhappy Carlotta laid out in its present form. This larger spot of seductive green is but one of a hundred suggestions of interest that fix the attention and pique our Northern curiosity.



A FLOWER AND BEAUTY SHOW IN THE ZOCALO.

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CHAPTER VII.

STREET SCENES AND SUGGESTIONS.

I.

The Weather, and the Brilliant National Costumes.

It seems strange enough to have the weather regarded as a "chestnut" that must be discarded from conversation. Each day opens serene, cloudless, and abounding in that inspiriting quality that makes an October morning on the hills of western Massachusetts the perfection of living. The early morning and evening usually bring just enough sting to brace the system, while midday warms one to the marrow. Of course there are no fires anywhere, but this absence is only felt on rare occasions, and then a heavy wrap brings solace.

Here one can appreciate that painful lack of color which is a chief want of our new, raw, and sombre life—in seeing the bright thing that Oscar Wilde sought to transplant under the gray skies and into the muddy streets and dingy buildings of London. He had borrowed a thought, though the world forgot it in contemplating the individual.

It often seems as if the sense of color had been absolutely killed out by the conventionalism of English and American life; but, as one sees it flash all over this country, it is with keen regret that he discovers that European fashions are already effacing the picturesque old for the dull tints of the universal new. The native dress, in its most brilliant manifestation, is a thing of rare beauty.

After enjoying the spectacle of a country gentleman arrayed in his best, the sight of government officials and business and professional men of this city in European dress is simply exasperating. The one pleases and satisfies the eye; the other is a pattern of commonplace ugliness.

The haciendado on horseback is a picture usually conscious of itself, for these fellows are born dandies, and both man and animal are full of prancing life. The horses are noble creatures, whose chests have been magnificently developed by the rarefied air, and the rider is athletic and a born horseman. He wears a suit of black cloth; a short, nattily-cut jacket with big silver buttons; a low-cut waistcoat, or more often none, to hide his delicate, snowy, and frilled shirts; tight pantaloons that bear along the outer seams two rows of fancy silver buttons; high-heeled and usually top boots that end in silver spurs; and a faja, or sash, of red and other brilliant color to bind the waist. Over the shoulder, or across the saddle, which is a most ornamental affair, is carried the bright serape that looks like an immense Roman scarf. The hat completes the picture, and the ample proportions of that put ridicule upon the meagre head-coverings of the North.

The only fault to be found with the felt sombrero is its weight; but, for some occult reason, it never seems burdensome in the wearing. Buffalo Bill's hats are a libel on the genuine Mexican article. His wide brim is all right, but this crown rises to a dignity and comeliness much like that which characterized the head-gear of the Puritans. But while the early settler of New England restricted himself to sober black, the Mexican indulges in all colors, from a beautiful silver gray, through browns, to a gorgeous purple. The crown is encircled by a silver or gold cord, often in three or even four coils, and the brim is embroidered with a wealth of silver or gold trimming. Straw hats are of similar shape, and provided with puffed bands of the same material.

II.

How the Indians Dress and Live.

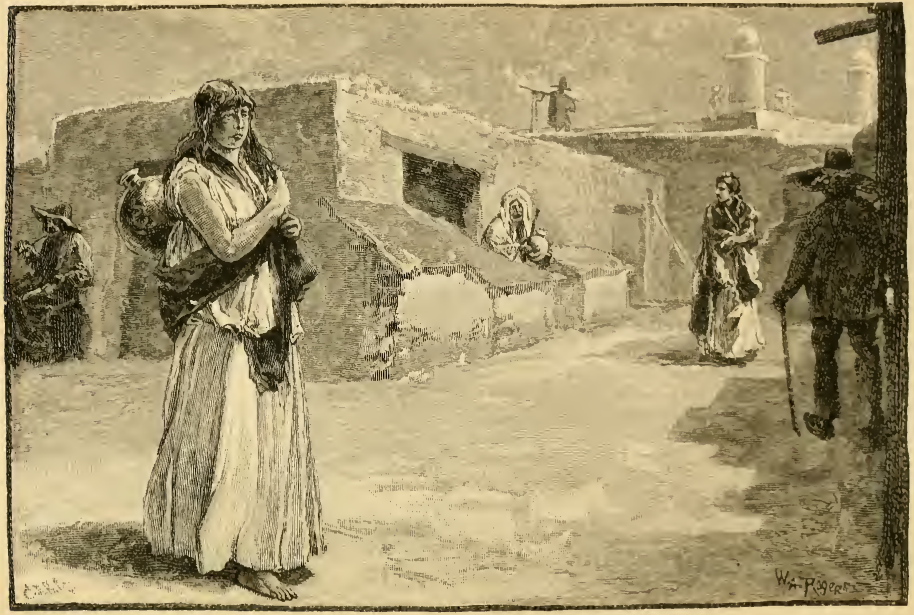
The Mexican dandy is one thing, and the average life of the people is quite another; but the tendency to hang colored banners upon the outer walls of the national life is the same in all classes.

The Indians or peasantry wear white cotton shirts and trousers, that contrast well with their brown skins, and straw hats. They all carry the scrape or blanket that is a necessity for the early morning and evening, and this is always brilliant-hued. The costume of the women is equally simple—generally a white waist and skirt, with a shawl called a reboso. Gay colors are frequently affected in the petticoats and rebosos, and the passion for gewgaws and cheap jewelry betrays a universal feminine weakness. Both sexes wear sandals of rawhide, and while the women most frequently cover their heads with the shawl, they are often hatted like the men.

These people live cheaply, and also very informally in many ways. The climate is on their side, as its mildness necessitates much less in the way of food, clothing, fuel, and shelter than with you. The scale of their life is something between the luxuries of your civilization and the vicissitudes of Indian experience in the West; and far inferior to the comforts of the old slave-days of the South. The idea of home-life, as you know it, is wanting. The independent house is unknown to the laborer of the cities, whose room or rooms are on the ground-floor, where there is little light and practically no ventilation. In the suburbs of this city and in the country the Indians usually own their adobe and mud dwellings or cabins.

It is a strange domestic life which every street stroller can contemplate in all its details. The common laborers use neither chairs, tables, nor beds, the substitute for the latter being rolls of rush matting; these rooms are very full of life, but they are bare of furniture; a variety of earthen vessels hold the family food and drink, and during the morning hours the women are universally occupied in grinding out corn on a metate, or flat stone. This is a laborious preliminary to the preparation of the tortilla, or Indian bread, that is eaten with frijoles, or boiled brown beans, and meat broiled or fried—when the latter can be afforded. A not unpalatable sauce, concocted out of lard, red pepper, onions, and cheese, is a prized accompaniment.

The Indians are not unhappy in their primitive and inadequate accommodations, but they need better things. To live on an undrained dirt floor, in an unventilated room, above the swamp that underlies all this city, and amid the sharp daily changes of even a mild climate, is to invite the grim destroyer. He comes very frequently in the form of pneumonia, as might be expected. It is pleasant to note that improved tenements are now being built, which will bring the laborer nearer to the comforts possessed by those whom he serves so faithfully. The new tenements have wooden floors raised several feet above the ground, are neat, light, and airy, and open upon courts that are paved, drained, and supplied with water.



A GLIMPSE OF THE POOR QUARTER.

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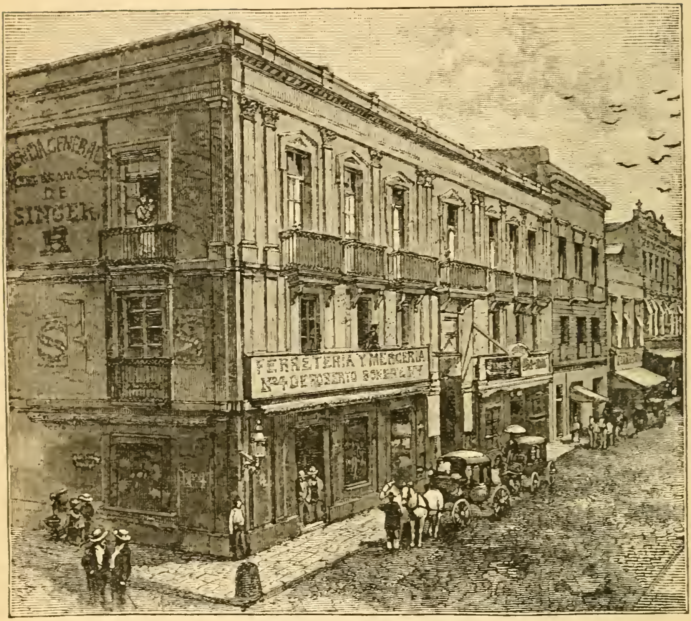
III.

Water-carriers, Beggars, and Lottery-venders.

The street life of this city is cosmopolitan, but essentially Eastern in many of its features. The aguador, or water-carrier, is a more familiar figure here than is the letter-carrier who flits about a Northern city, and he is also a more essential public servant. The aguador might have stepped out from a canvas scene of far-away Syria. He wears a kind of leather armor that encircles two great jars depending from the head, one before and the other behind, and is the source of the household water-supply. The water of the city is brought over the mammoth aqueducts into the public fountains, and thence it must be obtained for domestic use.

The aguador serves alike the just and the unjust, and he is too busy to be anything but an honest fellow, who speedily becomes a very accomplished and popular gossip. The Indian trait of feudal fidelity to places and the ancient customs appears in these water-carriers, who are in love with their labor and never dream that they lag superfluous on the stage as a mighty poor makeshift for the all-pervading modern water-pipe. They keep out the plumber, to be sure; but that lord of the North would be a very harmless individual in a country where Jack Frost never intrudes in any serious way.

Beggars are as plenty as fleas, and the foreigner is made the victim of both pests. The flea enforces his claims with a pair of sharp nippers, and the mendicant would like to do likewise; the former is principally felt, and the latter is always seen. Every corner, well-nigh each step, brings a pitiable applicant for alms, and one speedily observes that blindness is exceedingly common in this rarefied air



CHARACTERISTIC SHOP-FRONTS.

and blinding light, insomuch that extraordinary precautions are necessary to protect the eyes.

In going from brilliantly-lighted theatres into the night air pleasure-seekers cover their eyes for a season so as to make the readjustment less trying. Those having weakness of the eyes may well exercise great caution in coming to Mexico, and the least that they can do will be to forego reading in the cars.

It is noticeable that no law of the street prevails; pedestrians do not turn to the right as with you, for this is a "go-as-you-please" place. Each person looks out for himself or herself, dodging now this way and now that. All evidence of caste vanishes on the sidewalk, and no beggar or servant gives you any right of way; in this much we are as sturdily democratic as an American caucus.

The venders of lottery-tickets, men, women, and children, are scarcely less importunate than the beggars, and from their sales the government derives a yearly revenue that rises above $800,000. Here is another legacy from Spain; and as the tickets are sold for a real, it is made easy for the tourist to temporarily pocket his scruples and invest. The resident foreigners seem to be always buying lottery-tickets, but not one of them has told of drawing a prize. When, therefore, a late arrival came within one of the lucky number at the current drawing, and had sternly refused to pay out one real for the prize that lay under his eyes—well, he piously professed to esteem himself supremely fortunate in having so narrowly escaped the clutches of the devil!

IV.

The All-pervasive Odors.

It will have to be admitted, men and brethren, that the liveliest and most despotic impressions produced by this ancient city appeal to the sense of smell. The odors run from colossal sizes of stench down to a minute but persistent unpleasantness—for the supply is most extensive, and some of these bad smells have been in stock for five hundred years. This is a demonstrable fact. The attempt to discharge the sewage of the city into the lake that lies nearly on a level with the streets is a failure, and nothing like a thorough flushing of the sewers has taken place for hundreds of years. Thus the filth of centuries has accumulated under these pavements, and the evil spirits embodied in it make their escape when they can, a few at a time perhaps, so that some are always abroad.

The people who walk these streets owe their lives to the lofty location of the city. They have abundantly invited annihilation, but the upper classes appear to be as long lived here as in any well-drained city. The heavy weekly death-roll strikes the peons, who must most closely associate with the dank, stinking earth of the old portion of this city. The newer parts of the town are pleasant and apparently healthful.

The personality of these smells, by the way, is most striking. Each street and corner produces its own odor, so that the old resident ought to be able to walk blindfolded over the ancient city, and know always just where he stands. But, like many equally plausible theories, this one fails in the test. Even the most sensitive New England noses soon lose all power of discrimination, and, indeed, come to be rather partial to an antique smell. The enjoyment is acquired, like a love for Limburger cheese. It is a fortunate thing that curios of this kind are not transplantable, else a five hundred-years-old smell would accompany each returning pilgrim—if he escaped the chills and fever, for when that strikes one it acts as an entire antidote to any fondness for old *bric-à-brac* of this kind.

V.

Shoppers, and the Army and Navy.

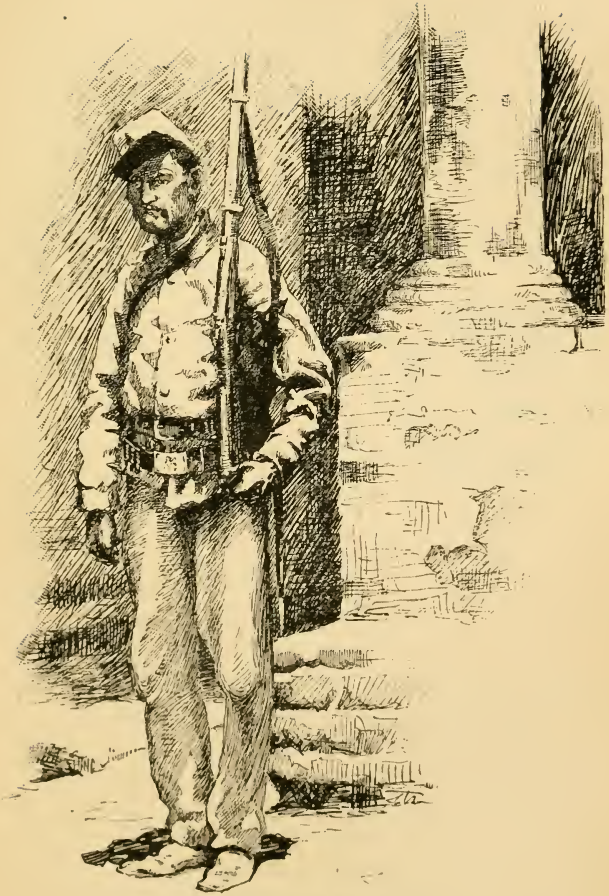
After the morning roll and cup of coffee—people breakfast here at noon—it pays one to loaf about the Plaza Mayor. The tide of shoppers is now at the full, and beautiful women who come on foot and in elegant carriages are as abundant and intent on each passing purchase as if this were New York.

Turning to the plaza, however, the scene is foreign. The dusky soldiers quartered over in the government palace are out on parade, and there are novel things about them. Some days they appear in uniforms of dark blue, and on others they are arrayed in white apparel, even to the caps. The soldiers wear the leather sandal of the peasantry, for here the climate necessitates no protection for the ankle or instep, and this offers the most comfortable and convenient shoeing. They do not keep step in marching, and present a most disorderly line to an eye trained to the exact movements of armed men. It is a curious fact, too, that the military bands do not step to the time of their music—for no better musical organizations exist. When they pass, producing magnificent strains of melody, one is curious to know how they succeed in keeping out of step—but they do it, every time!

Latterly the government has employed the army somewhat in public works, and these men of war carry gunny-bags of dirt as naturally as any peon. While the army as a unit is a mighty, yes, a controlling, factor in Mexican affairs, as an individual the soldier is a pretty poor stick. The ranks are largely recruited from the criminals of the country, and prisoners are sentenced to the army. The officers are good men, trained in the national military school, and the soldiers are never stationed long in one place lest they form local alliances and foment disturbances. The wives of the soldiers go with them about the country as camp-followers, but are obliged to live outside the barracks.

The Mexican army is said to number about 50,000 men—this must be a large estimate—and in addition to the national forces each state has its militia. The latter more frequently figure in the local disturbances, that cause more excitement as a rule to the American newspapers than to the people of this city. The regular cavalry numbers fourteen regiments, who muster about 6000 soldierly appearing men, who ride like centaurs.

Attached to the army is a unique body of men, who have been called the finest mounted troop in the world. They are the Rurales, mounted patrols. "This is Mexico!" exclaimed the people on September 16, when these men swept by the palace, 3000 strong, the most attractive feature of the grand review. Here is a fascinating relic of brigandage—a sort of dashing display that calls to mind the Pirates of Penzance; for these men have been drawn to the service of law and order much as frontier communities in the United States used to make an efficient sheriff out of a noted desperado. Energy once reprehensibly misdirected is made to serve the public good. These men were, many of them, once highway freebooters, such as robbed stages, until the proprietors of lines were frequently compelled to compromise by paying heavy toll. They made travelling in this country a serious peril. General Diaz negotiated a new order of things something after this fashion: He sent for the leaders, inquired how much brigandage paid on the average, and then asked whether they would not prefer to receive that sum in a settled income. Diplomacy won the day. The interview closed with an offer of $40 a month, the men to find horses and equipments, and thus were the terrors of the country organized into guards to protect the rural districts. The new way suits them and gratifies the public even more. Now for the picture. Imagine stalwart men, whose horsemanship is perfect, clad in leather suits profusely ornamented with silver, wearing gray sombreros; their saddles the most expensive and ornate; the horses of each band of a color, and matched to perfection; over each horseman's back a carbine, and bound on the saddle behind



MEXICAN SOLDIER ON GUARD.

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him a gay scrape—the animals in perfect line as they gallop by; now black chargers, then chestnut, and next piebald—and even horses clothed in leather, as were the steeds of the ancient knights of Spain. This, indeed, is a marvellously characteristic thing—"this *is* Mexico!"

The naval force consists of fourteen gunboats, and while we of the interior see little of the navy, that chief-engineer coming down the street—a Yankee who held a government clerkship when Andrew Johnson was in the White House—seems to justify this mention. He is up from Vera Cruz on leave, and will never leave this hot country to live again in the United States.

VI.

Telegraph, Telephone, and Electric Light.

The Indian dialect is frequently heard in the streets, and those who speak it always seem busy about something. They are trained porters, wonted to carrying heavy burdens, and are as patient as the universal donkey, but far more lively and intelligent. They pour into the city from all the region about with fruits or chickens, sometimes coming from one hundred miles away to find a market for their petty wares. Very often they take up a dog-trot, of which they never seem to tire, which enables them to cover long distances with surprising rapidity.

The wires that you have not yet succeeded in forcing under ground are stretched above this ancient square. The telegraph is in extensive use, including the government lines, those owned by the states of Zacatecas, Morelos, Hidalgo, and Michoacan, private lines in the states of Jalisco and Vera Cruz, and four railroad lines—the Central, National, Mexican, and Morelos. The electric light, too, sets up its feeble nightly substitute for the glory of the days.

What "Hello, Central!" may be in Spanish, I do not know, but its equivalent is heard at all hours of the day. The Mexican Telephone Company is under the management of M. L. Guireaud, a native of New Orleans and a very pushing business man. Several of the small telephone companies have been put under his charge with improved results. The government makes extensive use of the telephone, and it is quite generally patronized, not only at the capital but in the chief towns of the interior. On this table-land the telephone works with remarkable clearness, and is easily available for long-distance talking. The capital invested in the telephone is United States money, and there seems to be a fair prospect that the investors will eventually get some dividends. At present it is evidence of the world-wide over-expansion of such business ventures.

CHAPTER VIII.

A WELL-ORDERED CAPITAL.

I.

How the Pulque Shops are Regulated.

VITAL as are the deficiencies in real republican government, and unprogressive as the business methods employed appear to American eyes, there are things to be learned in Mexico. This capital city is governed sternly, with more than a hint of despotic methods, but the result as a whole is good order, and there are points of efficiency that cities in the United States might profit by. Take the liquor question, of which the cities of the United States know something.

All over the city of Mexico, flaming out more gaudily than a tea store in your cities, and also far more artistically decorated, are the pulque (poolkā) shops. Therein the national tipple is dispensed in a never-ending stream, save that each night at six o'clock the flow is temporarily checked. No more pulque can be sold until the next morning. The law is as inexorable as were the enactments of the Medes and Persians, and none appear to be so bold as to evade it.

"The prevalent vices of Mexico"—says David H. Strother, late consul-general, and Porte Crayon of long ago—"are gambling, drunkenness, and fighting, the Indian population being especially hasty with their knives." That last specification is graphically put, and the whole indictment establishes one great fact. These people are true

Southrons—mercurial, musical, light-hearted, impulsive, and about as ready with the blade as are Italians or Spaniards of the same order of life. Give them pulque at night, as you feed liquor to the heterogeneous Old World peoples who make up so considerable a share in the population of your great cities, and these streets would be turbulent and to a large degree unsafe loitering-places for honest men. The government says no, and there are not two sides to its dictum. Hence the streets are quiet and undisturbed to a remarkable degree, so that the tourist may wander about at will with none to molest or make him afraid.

Thus much for the Aztecs, or Indians. The upper classes are under a different *régime*, and gilded barrooms and restaurants do an unchecked evening business; but want of money serves as an iron hand to debar the entrance of the common people within such doors. The other class do not abuse their privileges, and the only noisy intoxication noted was traceable to some Americans.

This gives a peg on which to hang a general observation regarding international misconceptions. The Mexican who strays up into the mining regions of the United States and there exhibits some of the worst failings of the lowest side of life here is accepted as a standard by which certain Americans pass a superficial estimate on this people. It is also true that coarse adventurers or irresponsible bummers among the some four hundred Americans who constitute our colony here offer an undesirable style of character that serves to misrepresent the people of the United States to refined residents of Mexico. Here, as in Europe, our swaggering, assertive, and carelessly discourteous element insists upon occupying a front seat upon many occasions.

II.

The Character and Manufacture of the National Beverage.

The Mexican had his pulque before the days of the Montezumas, and no meal from which it is absent satisfies his soul. This national beverage is the fermented juice of the maguey—known to American hothouses as the century-plant. Here it is not allowed to flower, for the natives know a trick worth two of that. They extract the heart of the plant at flowering time—it blooms much more frequently here than under your skies—the cavity fills with a precious sap, and this last is sucked two or three times a day into the body of a long gourd. This is emptied into a pig-skin and the juice is fermented. The result is a liquor that resembles koumiss, in milky appearance, contains water, gluten, and alcohol, and is said to taste something like beer; but the fermentation in fresh hides imparts such a putrid odor to the popular liquid that most visitors are willing to accept the opinion of others as to its qualities. In fact it does not do to ponder just about dinner-time over the statement that 250,000 pints of this highly-scented stuff are daily consumed in this city.

Colonel Sellers calculated that the inhabitants of Asia were bound to buy his eye-water, but it is certain that Mexicans are always going to want pulque, and one is not surprised to discover clever Yankees busily figuring on this fact. A single plant is said to produce about 125 quarts of juice, after which it dies; but the old roots send out new shoots, and the plants alternate in their yield. The maguey is hardy, and requires little cultivation, while some grounds devoted to it are said to produce a revenue of $10,000 a year. Of all this one cannot speak very intelligently, but R. M. Pulsifer, of the Boston *Herald*, is president of a company that is to test the profitableness of pulque-making.

In the district of Tequila this plant has special virtues, and is more satisfactorily employed in the production of the agreeable liquor bearing the name of that region. Tequila is colorless, and has the strength and flavor of Scotch whiskey, being made after a recipe which was used before Cortez saw Mexico. Mescal is a liquor obtained from the fleshy and whiter part of the leaves of the maguey-plant, and resembles Holland gin. The medicinal properties claimed for pulque are a good deal like those attached to koumiss, it being a great promoter of digestion and sleep, and of avail in nervous diseases. Its intoxicating properties, when freely indulged in, are of an ugly character, resembling perhaps a rural, hard-cider drunk.

The sugar-growing states produce large quantities of aguardiente, an excellent brandy that is distilled from cane juice, the total annual product being valued at over $2,000,000. Where the American would gulp down whiskey the Mexican gentleman will call for brandy. The wine consumed in Mexico—and it is as universal in restaurants and hotels as if this were a Continental country—is chiefly imported from France or Spain; but much of this soil is admirably adapted to grape culture, and some good native wines are shown. A very good article of beer is made at Toluca, but St. Louis lager, at fifty cents a bottle, is much used.

III.

Public Order and Lawyers.

From the discussion of liquor to an acquaintance with the police is not in this case a strained transition. "The force" appears to be an excellent one, and it is clothed with arbitrary and apparently semi-judicial powers. "Serenos," the officers are called, in lieu of our English appellation of "cops," "bobbies," or "peelers"—for a nickname the guardians of the public peace always will bear. These men are well drilled and affable, but firm—very. They are stationed in the centre of the roadway, and wear efficient-looking revolvers in plain sight. If a domestic disagreement occurs the policeman is ever ready to step in and settle it, and his verdict is accepted with unquestioning docility. He imparts information courteously, but if a malefactor seeks to escape him or disobeys a call to halt, the sereno shoots with marked ability. Such readiness leads the peons to respect and admire him. The policeman is furnished with a lantern at night, which he places exactly in the centre of the street, and the hackmen are particular not to disturb it. To assure his activity and vigilance, he is made to blow a whistle at allotted periods during the night hours. The streets are illuminated with gas or the electric light, but the lantern is often useful in penetrating dark corners or houses.

It is said, by the way, that the lower courts of this city sustain an excellent reputation for dealing out even-handed justice, rich and poor faring alike at their hands. Police-court lawyers must be as abundant as in some Northern cities, for the chief ambition of the young Mexican seems to be to don a long coat and be a lawyer—a condition of things which does not conduce to prosperous and useful citizenship, and is much deprecated by the newspapers.

IV.

A Quaint Fire Department.

While American life-insurance companies are doing a thriving business in this city, there is no opening for fire insurance. The capital is virtually fire-proof, the houses being constructed of stone, sun-dried brick, tiles, or other non-combustible materials. The stairways are stone, and the roofs and floors of brick or cement. But even where no fire is used for heating, curtains sometimes catch the flames from gas or lamp, or the goods in a store or warehouse are imperilled. On emergencies like these an antiquated fire department materializes. Its "machines" would make the chief engineer of an American fire department hold his sides for a week. The antique and petite fire-engine was made in Brussels some forty years or so ago, but it shines like a New England andiron, and is the idol of the firemen. A grave compliment to its grandeur, tendered to the men grouped around it, won the hearts of the brown-faced fire-laddies, and they simultaneously poured out the gracious acknowledgment: "A thousand thanks!" Other paraphernalia of the department, which was of an equally primitive character, bore the mark of a London maker. It may be added that men grow old and die without seeing this department in action.

V.

The Paradise where Hackmen are Regulated.

A compensation of life in this city may be found in its admirable cab system. There is one place on this continent where the hackman is ruled with a strong hand, and perhaps a semi-despotic government was necessary to achieve his overthrow. The same class lines that are recognized in the railroad and horse-cars appear in the hack system. Coaches bearing a blue flag are of the first class, and cost $1 an hour on week days; a red flag marks the second class, price 75 cents an hour; while the third-class carriages display a white flag, and the drivers are entitled to 50 cents an hour, and on feast days these rates are doubled. The above prices per hour buy the coach, and you may fill it with four people if so disposed. When you hire a first-class coach you get one, for as the vehicles lose their gloss they are degraded to the class below, and after more wear they sink to the white flag; but the fifty-cent class contains coaches that would command full price in New York City, and it is easy to economize in carriage-hire without loss of comfort. The tariff rates are conspicuously posted in each carriage, and the drivers are numbered.

The sharp oversight that is exercised over these fellows was illustrated in an object lesson given by an American resident. The cabby who drove us to the Hotel San Carlos was not unlike his kind the world over, and insisted upon receiving an overcharge. He had counted too confidently on the careless acquiescence that distinguishes American tourists, for a visit to the administration in the municipal palace, the supreme governor of hacks, brought swift redress. Our friend told his story, gave the number of the carriage, and the driver was speedily summoned and made to disgorge the amount taken above his legal fee. He also received a vigorous reprimand, and doubtless rejoiced in not being deposed from his seat, which is the extreme penalty, not infrequently applied. At least one such case occurred during our call on the courteous king of cabs. One little internal convenience of these carriages is worth noting. Passengers are saved the unpleasant necessity of bawling at their driver by the presence of a cord which is attached to his arm; a pull on this brings the conveyance to a halt, and enables those inside to make their wishes understood.

VI.

A Horse Railroad that Carries Freight and Funerals.

The horse-car system offers even more novel and suggestive features. The rapidity of progress required from the mules over these flat streets is something phenomenal, and the frequent contests of speed in which the drivers delight to indulge adds a fillip to many a ride. They are required to blow a horn at the street crossings, and all day long the air is filled with not unmusical tootings. Cars of the first and second classes (yellow and green) leave the central square of the city every ten, fifteen, thirty, and sixty minutes for all parts of the city within a radius of ten miles. Within the city limits the fare is a medio, or 6¼ cents, equal to five cents of American money.

Smoking is universal in the street-cars as in railroad coaches, but the tobacco is good, and as the car-windows are always open the women are not incommoded. Universal deference is paid to women, and the Mexican gentleman would be shocked at the boorishness shown in a New York horse-car.

The scope of these tramways, as they are called, is enlarged by the addition of freight cars, and goods of all sorts are hauled in every direction without visibly impairing the passenger service. The city is netted with nearly a hundred miles of tracks which are all under one management. A householder who contemplates moving engages a freight car for the conveyance of his goods and chattels. This convenient trucking system could not be transplanted among the hills of an Eastern city, but the Mexican idea may not be without its value to some communities on the prairies.

The men who laid out this horse-railroad system could give the shrewdest Yankee points. They bought up the hearses of the city, built funeral-cars, and proposed to transport funerals with neatness and despatch. This they now do. The funeral-cars are draped in black for adults and white for children, the coffin being exposed under a canopy. The mourners occupy a special car following the body, and the impression produced by such corteges is a very peculiar one.

VII.

The Post-office.

The postmaster of the city is a wide-awake official, who has visited the United States to study our system. His office is now equipped with Yale locks and boxes, and the service is admirable. The letter postage is ten cents, and business men on the line of the Mexican Central road are said to send their correspondence across the border to the Texas side for mailing, whence letters come for five cents. Lists of the letters received are posted by bulletins in all the post-offices, so that the traveller can look out for his own mail.

Mexico is ahead of us, it may be added, in having adopted the metric system.

CHAPTER IX.

JOURNALISM AND DIPLOMACY.

I.

No High Pressure in Newspaper Work.

THERE is no "nigger squat on the safety valve" of Mexican journalism (to quote from John Hay's dialect versification of an episode in Mississippi River steamboating), insuring the highest possible amount of pressure and the greatest attainable speed—but giving the public the fastest service with a total disregard for the lives of those concerned in the race. No one here sits up all night at the end of a telegraph-wire to catch the first information concerning the death of a national hero, the downfall of a ministry, the outbreak of a strike, or the result of an election across the sea. The late news and the timely editorial that must be born in the small hours are things yet afar off. The nightmare of a "beat" or "scoop," that rises indistinct yet most disturbing out of the scramble of a day never intrudes upon the untroubled slumbers of the local newspaper man.

He rests still in that Sleepy Hollow wherein the American editors were pleased to imagine that they toiled before the day of Bennett, Raymond, Greeley, and Weed. It seems like going back over forty years to that formative period when electricity was first being enlisted in news-gathering, and when the modern newspaper was just beginning to organize its marvellous forces. The newspapers of Mexico yet offer a calm haven for the essayist and the poet, and above all they are sought by the inveterate and unruffled theorist. Most often he presides over their gentle and harmless destinies, issuing his dreams and his radical manifestoes in the face of surrounding turbulence or revolution with a placidity of purpose that a general might envy.

The contrast of all this to the remorseless race that is now going on in the United States is, of course, the greatest possible. It is very interesting and restful, but there is nothing inspiring about it. We shall never go back to anything like this, and already the modern Minotaur that we call enterprise has begun to exact victims from Mexico. Several of the dailies in this city are taking half a column of telegraph each day by way of the Galveston cable.

II.

How the Papers are Handled.

The morning papers are cried on the streets the night before their alleged date of publication, for they generally go to press at 5 P.M. The merciful Mexican editor is thus merciful to himself, and no one blames him for his want of self-sacrifice. "Mañana" (to-morrow) is a word in universal use, the very watchword of Mexico. It springs to the lips of the people in every business transaction as a sort of constitutional barrier and protest against rapid methods in any direction. The Yankee who would do business here must not only tolerate but learn to echo "mañana," and he must angle to make to-morrow to-day with the inexhaustible patience that distinguishes the successful fisherman.

The Saturday-night papers are sold Sunday, but there are none ready for Monday morning, excepting a special Monday weekly that has been planned to fill this gap.

Here, therefore, is a place where no Sunday newspaper work is done, but those who deprecate such labor will not be able to draw any moral that will avail them in criticising the newspapers of the United States.

Newspapers seem to flourish in a phenomenal way, and the number is so great that one fails to see how most of them live. No criterions that we know are sufficient to justify, much less to account for, this mushroom growth. Not only in this capital city, but in the chief towns of all the states, are newspapers that possess little of those qualities that command success with you, and yet they live and thrive, and are boldly critical of existing things.

III.

The Leading Journals, their Characteristics and Policy.

The chief daily of the capital is *El Monitor Republicano*, a Liberal opposition sheet, having a circulation of 3500 copies. It is owned by Gracia Torres, and is a profitable establishment, for I am told that it clears an annual profit of $40,000. Printers here, by the way, earn $5 or $6 a week. The editor-in-chief, Señor Chavarri, is now serving out a sentence of seven months in Belem penitentiary. The charge against him was of inciting sedition, and his savage criticisms were of such a character that I doubt whether they would have been tolerated in the United States.

The weakness of opposition writing here lies in its intemperance, the editors dealing in the most sweeping charges, going to the length of calling for actual revolt, and yet seldom presenting definite facts upon which their denunciations are shown to rest. With an excitable people, who are without any sound training in republicanism, this sort of thing could easily develop into an actual peril to the government. There are enough exhibitions of despotism in Mexico, in all conscience, but in dealing with such a representative case as the above the forms of law are scrupulously observed. Quite likely the government is bound to win in a suit of the character of that brought against Señor Chavarri, but his trial was most ably conducted for the defence. He was first sentenced by a lower court, and then the case was appealed to the supreme tribunal, when the verdict was reaffirmed. The best legal talent of the country argued the editor's case.

El Monitor Republicano takes short Associated Press despatches via Galveston, and also has a brief news service from El Paso, Texas. This necessitates going to press somewhat later than is the habit of the other dailies. It has always been identified with the Liberal cause, and fought for existence against the domination of the priests.

There are five other Liberal dailies in this city. *El Partido Liberal* is the organ of General Porfirio Diaz, the president of the republic. *La Republica* is the organ of the government, and there are probably times when its editor discovers that late official announcements occupy columns that he had otherwise provided for. A paper of growing importance is *El Nacional*, which opposes the government, and is especially devoted to advocating tariff reform and to discussing questions concerning taxation. *La Prensa* and *La Patria* are other Liberal dailies. *El Pacto Federal*, which was the mouthpiece of ex-President Gonzales, has just died.

The chief daily paper of the Church party is *El Tiempo*, which is fiercely Catholic, and is edited under clerical supervision. It circulates 2500 copies, and is very bitter against Americans and the railroad system which they have introduced. *La Voz de Mexico* is also an earnest advocate of Roman Catholicism. *Voz de España* is noticeable because it has supported the claims of Guatemala against Mexico.

The penny press possesses considerable foothold here, the chief journal of that sort being *El Monitor*, which circulates among the common people. *El Patriata* also sells for a penny. There is in addition a weekly cheap paper, *El Valedor*, that is conducted by an educated young editor who writes in the street dialect of the lower classes. Such an enterprise might be made a great power for good —or for harm. The men who argue that projects of this kind must be both cheap and nasty will some day be taught that there is a better way, and one quite as short, to pecuniary success.

A novel and successful daily is *El Foro*, which circulates among the lawyers, and is most ably managed. The fact that this city swarms with members of the bar accounts for its special success.

There is one American daily here, the *Two Republics*, and the French daily, *Trait d'Union*, is said to be very strongly edited.

IV.

The Weekly Press.

The weekly journals probably number above thirty, and they deal with every imaginable interest, from bull-fighting up to science. It is characteristic of the slow and steady Germans that they support only a weekly paper. There are monthly periodicals, reviews, and so on, which help to illustrate the national disposition to theorize over everything. If one were to judge alone from the constitution of the republic, and from the essays and editorials that appear in the press of Mexico, he would look to this as a model country.

There is one admirable weekly paper here in which outsiders have a particular interest. The *Mexican Financier*, printed in parallel columns of Spanish and English, is a specimen of choice American journalism planted and flourishing in this alien soil. It is controlled by the three men who own it—Simon Levy, the founder, who spends much of his time looking after the interests of the paper outside of Mexico; Charles L. Seeger, formerly of Springfield, Mass., publisher; and Fred. R. Guernsey, lately of the Boston *Herald*, editor. The social and business standing which these young men have achieved shows in what esteem their work is held by the best people of Mexico. Their unsubsidized paper is indispensable to those who desire to keep posted on Mexican matters, from the fact that it discusses current affairs with intelligence and force from the Mexican side. Its sources of information are the best, and its sympathetic consideration for the best interests of this republic does not make it disloyal to the most progressive purposes.

Thus the *Financier* has lately attacked the system by which the large land-owners keep their peons in essential slavery. The laborer who gets in debt to his master must free himself from this pecuniary obligation before going to work elsewhere. This gives a hard master a grip of iron on the improvident peon. Unless the servant is able to persuade some other employer to buy him off, a condition of slavery really exists. It is interesting to observe that this question was promptly taken up by the local papers of various states, and the subject is being thoroughly agitated. In ways like this the *Financier* is doing wholesome pioneer work, without going into politics. It is not too much to say that the administration cares more for what this independent and responsible journal—which is read in all parts of the United States, in Paris, London, and Berlin—may say of its acts and policy than for many comments in the purely local newspapers. The *Financier* has made a field for itself.

V.

Value of a Trained Diplomatic Service.

One is impressed anew here with the fact that the United States lags behind the older nations of the world in the efficiency of her diplomatic service. The work of building up a non-partisan civil service must be made to include the establishment of a permanent foreign service, with promotion for merit and a stable tenure. Diplomacy will have to be recognized as a profession, the mastery of which everywhere depends on long training, in which linguistic acquirement is one of the prime requisites.

The new American minister, General Jackson, who succeeded Judge Morgan, is a very able gentleman of a poetical temperament and a poor memory for faces. He served in a subordinate capacity at Vienna many years ago, and at his time of life it is too much to expect that he can at once do equal service with a professional diplomat like Lionel Carden, the exceptionally qualified British special agent long located here, who has just been promoted by his government. We shall some day recognize that a healthy foreign trade must be largely dependent upon alert, expert, and thorough diplomatic pushing.

The departure of Minister Morgan was accompanied by the removal of Consul-General Strother, whose six years of service had made him a most useful representative of the United States. If Secretary Bayard has succeeded in reinforcing General Jackson with a consul-general who speaks Spanish and knows even a little about Mexico and the ways of her people, he has done something towards making good the place of an admirable public servant.

It may be said that Mr. Bayard's sharp work in sending the United States marines down South has given him a reputation in Mexico, and his prompt attention to all suggestions that the rights of American citizens are being interfered with anywhere on this continent is looked on with something like apprehension. The South American representatives at the Mexican capital agree that the new administration is regarded as a strong one all over the southern portion of the American continent, and it will pay the secretary to look well after our diplomatic agents.

Good ministers and consuls command respect for our government, and bad ones bring gross discredit on the United States. Some shameful past examples in South America are quoted everywhere. "As drunk as the American minister" was once a common comparison in one of the republics. The policy of filling our consular service with worn-out political hacks, and making party service the sole ground for diplomatic appointment, should come to an end. Just how much the United States suffers from the lack of a permanent diplomatic corps only residents out of the country can fully appreciate.

CHAPTER X.

A BULL-FIGHT AT TOLUCA.

I.

Genesis of the Bull-Fight.

AMONG other European resemblances which the tourist finds here is the Continental Sunday, and the Sunday of Mexico shares with that of Spain the shame of perpetuating the bull-fight. The national government frowns upon this brutal relic of the Moors, and no bull-fighting exhibitions are permitted within the federal district; but the custom hangs upon the outskirts of the forbidden ground, and it thrives in all the states.

Truly the evil that men do lives after them, and it was easy to graft this Spanish usage so that it flourishes here as tenaciously as though native to the soil. The Toltecs offered flowers and fruits and ripe grain to propitiate their gods; that worship was succeeded by the stern and cruel forms of the Aztecs, whose sacrificial stones were ever wet with human blood before hideous graven images; and then came the adroit diplomacies of the Roman Catholic Church, and on the pagan feast days she supplanted forms that long had flourished with her own ceremonials and observances. It was a kindly exchange, enforced to be sure with an iron hand; but done with the tact that conducted proselyting as a perfected art. As bull-fighting in the Old World was an advance on, and compromise with, gladiatorial contests, so in Mexico it fed an appetite for blood that had been awakened by the incredible atrocities committed by the priests of Huitzilopochtli.

As an historical link the bull-fight has its high interest, but as an exhibition seen in the refined light of a Christian age it is more than time that it became a memory and a tradition in North America. The faithful reporter, commissioned to see and exhibit the country as it is, must do his duty; but the average visitor, particularly he of Puritan antecedents, will be in straits of perplexity over this matter.

At this point the power of personal example usually appears to win the day, clothed in the famous coat that partially wraps about the historic figure of Uncle Hannibal Hamlin of Maine. The venerable ex-vice-president, when adorning the court of Spain as minister of the United States, is reported to have witnessed a bull-fight, and also to have been accompanied by Mrs. Hamlin. If a sojourner from that city in Maine where the Rev. Dr. Pond for a long lifetime was the Hercules of an antique theology could see this thing—the steps of the sophistic reasoning will be clear to every mind—why may not the debating tourist go? And so it comes about that many a man follows the old claw-hammer, and his wife is shielded by the skirts of the wife of an American minister and patriot, as both put an end to cogitation by appearing in the Plaza de Toros.

Whatever may be thought of the argument that thus triumphs, one visit doubtless suffices for the average man, and is more than enough for the ordinary woman.

II.

Scenery along the Line of the National Railroad.

Imagine a morning such as heralds one of those misplaced June days that occasionally stray into September in Massachusetts—cloudless and balmy, full of the mellow sunlight, musical with the melody of birds, and fragrant with the rich odors of tropical vegetation—that is outside of the malodorous old city limits.

The capital is early astir with women who are attired for church, and men who generally are not on piety bent. Perhaps a hundred Roman Catholic churches are open to worshippers, chief of them all the noble cathedral, and the edifices devoted to Protestant uses are by no means neglected. The shops and stores are all open until noon, and business is brisk on this day when customers are at leisure.

It takes no intimate acquaintance with the population to discover that a considerable portion of the festively arrayed throng are hurrying towards the railroads that run to cities where the bull-ring will be opened in the afternoon. The Mexican National Railway, one of the American lines, has been heralding for a week, on gay posters, the way to Toluca, a place of about 12,000 inhabitants, the capital of the state of that name, and some three hours and a half, and forty-five miles, from the city of Mexico.

The ride thither encompasses scenery of great variety, the region being rugged to a degree that makes railroading a notable achievement, even for this narrow-gauge track. Great mountains are encircled and crossed in a way to open vast stretches of valley views that reveal the agricultural richness of the intervals. Land not adapted to other purposes is utilized to grow extensive patches of the maguey-plant, from which the most desirable of the national beverages is extracted. At Rio Hondo the elevation is 7550 feet, and we are about 200 feet above the city of Mexico; then the track enters the foothills of the mountain ridge that forms the western boundary of the valley of Mexico; some notable rock-cuts and difficult bridging are passed; then a most attractive, sunlit valley opens, rich in cincolates or cribs of golden corn; next a considerable tunnel and more abrupt climbing brings, through an opening in the hills, a view of the lordly city of Mexico and the mountains beyond, such as could only come under a Southern sky and sun. The lakes shine as mirrors without a flaw. Stunted pines and spruces struggle along the ascending track as reminders of the Rocky Mountain region, until the train halts at Cima. This is the summit or divide, 9974 feet above tide-water, the highest point of the National road, and the loftiest station in the country.

Thence we descend, and ere long the extinct volcano of Nevado de Toluca looms up twenty miles away. This most eloquent preacher appeals to the depths of human nature from his exalted pulpit and altar in the region of eternal snow, 15,156 feet above us. The distinctive features of Mexican life are all to be seen during the remainder of the journey to Toluca, but they must go unrecorded. The mountain overawes petty incident with easy majesty, and takes a supreme hold on the attention. And this is a morning sermon that cannot be reported.

This National line—the one road in Mexico that does not grant free passes—appears to be admirably managed. Its hands are all Americans, Western and Southern boys, kindly and most competent employees. They take a lively interest in tourists from the United States, love to gossip and hear about things at the North; but to a man they profess loyal attachment to the National road and to Mexico. We are advised that a certain restaurant near the depot sets a famous turkey dinner, in which American dishes are reinforced by the choicest Mexican delicacies, and the grateful reality falls nothing short of the advertisement.

III.

A State Capital and the Volcano.

Our duty to the carnal man being thus well discharged, we make a decorous entry into the well-built and thriving town of Toluca, whose hot and dusty main street stretches away to end in the picturesque and shaded plaza or public square. One is pleasantly impressed by the fact that the place is clean and well drained. It boasts an inartistic but pretentious statue to the patriot Hidalgo.

To leave Toluca without ascending the volcano, one of the many places which Baron von Humboldt made famous, is a sore trial, for 'tis said that from that height, on a clear day, one can see the Pacific Ocean, one hundred and sixty miles away. The journey is not a difficult one to make, though the tourist will need to provide a full camping outfit therefor.

The city is a miniature of the big capital, with its square and garden, its churches and governmental palace. The omnipresent soldiers loaf about the entrance of the latter, but it is impossible to gain admittance to the halls wherein the Legislature of a Mexican state holds sway. It speedily becomes apparent that the inhabitants of Toluca spend their off day in a way that brings to the surface few gross exhibitions of license. They flood the streets and square, but bear themselves sensibly and quietly, sitting by groups in the sun, strolling about, making neighborly calls, and, above all, doing something to make the day a bright spot in the child-life of the household. No little one seems to be abused by this people, and tenderness towards the young and veneration and care for the aged appear to be almost fixed rules of conduct with all classes.

The most lovable side of Mexican character—barring a good deal of irregular living—centres in their domestic virtues. Great students of the race tell us that man is the only animal that abuses the female. The observation that produced this melancholy truism was not supplied with its material by Mexicans, much as these people cherish bull-fighting, or indulge in cock-pits that are not unknown to New England. There is a gentle and chivalrous quality to be credited over against that cruel streak of savagery coming down from an Indian and a Castilian ancestry.

Since the Roman Catholic Church has so largely lost its hold here, the people do not mingle enough religion with their Sundays, but it must be said, also, that the day is one of outward order, an occasion for physical rest and outdoor recreation. The families are not divided on Sundays, and the restraining influences that go with the home visibly exercise their power. The scene on the plaza of Toluca was a most interesting one. Husband and wife watched the fish that circled about the basin of the fountain with as much gusto as did their offspring, and parents shared the quiet, juvenile employments of the children. During many hours only one slightly tipsy man marred the scene, and he was quickly and quietly suppressed by the police, while the universal good-humor was never betrayed into anything approaching a disagreement. Smiles were universal and politeness habitual. Could that much be said of a similar day in any city of the United States?

IV.

The Bull-Ring and the Spectators.

This combat of men with bulls is set for four o'clock, and is supposed to crown the pleasures of the day. Not knowing where the bull-fighting is to take place, we drift with the crowd as it begins to move, animated by a common purpose. This carries us to the Plaza de Toros, a wooden amphitheatre, built about a circus-ring, around which the tiers of seats rise to a circle of boxes above them. Mr. Carter, who is in charge of the telegraph service of the National road, and has seen this sort of thing before, sniffs at the wooden structure and tells of more splendid rings that are surrounded by walls of stone.

The entrance is already choked by men, women, and horses, who are kept in order by a file of soldiers, while inside a brass band has struck up an inspiriting air. An usher escorts the party to a box on the shady or aristocratic side of the circle. It seems that sittings on the sunny side are cheaper, and this is fortunate, for the tiers over against us fairly swarm with life. The Indians sit there as happy as lizards, more than content under a heat that would broil an American. There is massed color of a robust, kaleidoscopic splendor that makes the European dress a mean thing, and dulls the finer glory of the Mexican gentleman. The peons are clothed in cotton, against which the brown hands, faces, and necks gleam out richly under the broad hats, and each bears his serape of red, blue, brown, gray, royal purple, or mixed coloring; these wraps are disposed in numberless ways that combine to heighten the gorgeousness of the picture. The musicians are also Indians, who differ in no respect from their fellows as to dress, and they play divinely without a printed note. Probably they cannot read, for music seems to be a universal endowment. Men and women are grouped together, the latter wearing shawls with that mysterious certainty that prevents their falling from the head unless the wearer so wills it. These rebosos swell the wave of color. On one side of the half-circle the local magnates are on exhibition, and in the boxes are some of the beauties of the city, who act about as their sisters do at a horse-race in the United States.

Soon the whole throng are swayed by a spasm of impatience, and the hoarse cries of the peons rise like a complaint of the gallery-gods. Music has no power to soothe this clamorous demand for the day's spectacle, and the hubbub is only quieted by the opening of the first act.

V.

The Performers and their Work.

The grand procession, composed of all the actors save the bulls, now enters. Here is a trio of red-blanketed mules who will be called into service later to drag off the slaughtered bull. The picadores are the two horsemen, whose model should be the Spanish knights of old ; they are each armed with a lance, and bestride wretched specimens of horseflesh that are deemed only fit for death. Then come the half-dozen chulos, men on foot, who are gayly decked with ribbons and wear highly-colored cloaks. Next, as chief actor, the star of the occasion and fully conscious of it, is the matador. His companion, of almost equal importance, bears the banderillos, whose character and uses will appear later.

The procession moves around the circle, the mules retire, and preparations for business are in order. At convenient distances about the circle, and close to the wooden wall, are erected barriers behind which the toreadores or bull-fighters may retire when hard pressed by their adversary. The chulos distribute themselves in the spaces between the barriers, ready with brilliant cloths to tease the bull; the horsemen, who are protected with a sole-leather armor, as are the sorry steeds, raise their lances for the onslaught; and the matador, who is to kill the animal with his long, slender sword, puts on an air of attention. All is ready; enter bull number one.

It is a young, black creature, not of the first order of bravery, but he makes a fair fight for life. He catches sight of one of the horsemen and makes a vicious plunge for him; the rider bears him off with the lance, pricking the skin of the bull, who darts for the other horseman; the red, yellow, and purple cloths are waved at him, and he is diverted into rushing again and again after the chulos, who spring behind the barriers against which the bull's horns crash at very short intervals; the little circle is a very busy and exciting arena, for now the bull has run his horn into the belly of one of the horses, and its rider has been overthrown and has taken flight to a barrier. The chulos rush forward and endeavor to attract the bull, while the other horseman shouts a defiance that calls the bull to his side. Then the prostrate horse is raised and proves to be little injured. The bull skirts the ring and sends all his tormentors flying to cover; but he is beginning to lose pluck.

It is now in order for the horsemen to retire, and the chulos advance their ingenious torture another stage. One of them comes to the front bearing the banderillos—barbed darts, about two feet long, ornamented with colored paper plumes—which he sticks into the neck of the animal, dexterously jumping one side to avoid his attacks. The smart of this indignity rouses the bull to new fury. Now comes the final act of the tragedy. The matador advances alone and the bull dives at him, head down. This is an expert fellow, for he swerves to escape the attack, and with deadly precision plunges his sword "between the left shoulder and the blade"—the black bull falls, shudders, and is dead. It is high art of its kind, and the audience are delighted.

The smooth-faced bull-sticker—clad in knee-breeches of blue, with his hair in a queue, and a coat of purple and gold—visibly swells with pride.

It is now possible to differentiate the characters and to understand the play. This is a tragedy in three acts, and its bloody properties vary, with always the certainty that the life of the bull will be taken. He can win the applause of the crowd that pen his agony about by selling life dearly, for if he wounds or kills in return the delight of the spectators is greatly enhanced, so much that on rare occasions he may win freedom again, but the dumb actor is not posted on all this. He acts out nature, and plays his part well or ill in ignorance of all remote possibilities.

VI.

The Little Red Bull and the Picadore.

But to our tragedy. First are the horsemen who may repel but not kill, and whose risk is greater than would be comfortable to a novice. Then the man who inserts the barbed darts, and who must be agile to escape harm. Last, the athletic butcher who undertakes to plant the long sword in the vital part. The lot of the chulos, who flirt the maddening cloths in all the acts and can retreat to cover at any time, is the happiest of all. Theirs is the most boyish and the least dignified share in the "sport."

But now another bull has rushed into the arena, an undersized red animal of great pluck. The people are all attention, for this combatant has a desperate quality that the merest tyro may discover. He flies like an arrow at the nearest picadore and pierces the belly of the horse even while the rider parries him with the lance; the entrails of the wounded creature protrude, but he is regarded as good for service yet; the chulos distract the bull only for a moment, and then fly while he is bearing down on the other horseman. The reddened horn gleams wickedly, and its owner has learned that lances are not serious. The picadore wards off the attack well, but the onslaught is irresistible; that vicious head crashes through to its work, the horns are buried deep in the horse, and steed and rider fall to the earth.

Now see the crowd! Every man, woman, and child is standing, and the din is deafening. Sombreros of every hue, from the straw of the peon to the brown and silver-banded felt, are shied into the ring. The wretched horse has received his death-wound and is gasping in the throes of dissolution. How will the rider fare? for there is no mercy in this little red bull. Truly it seems a desperate case. The picadore is pinned for an instant, and ere he can clear himself or the chulos can rally to his rescue, that gory head is again active. The bull plunges, the man is seen lying on the forehead and face between the wide horns, and to all appearance impaled on one of them. Sickening sensations of unavailing sympathy and creeping shudders of disgust gallop over the beholder. But the man clings with a desperate grip about the neck of the blinded and raging beast. There is blood on his clothing, yet his clasp is strong, and perhaps the horn-thrust will not prove fatal. The other inmates of the ring seem strangely slow, while in reality they have acted with marvellous rapidity, and the bull is overthrown at last. As he falls the unfortunate picadore is pulled away. He does not faint, there is no gush of blood, and in fact he bears but a scratch on his side, after all.

Moved by a characteristic Southern impulse the people cheer and throw big, round, Mexican dollars at the hero of the day, who hobbles about picking up the silver hail until he carries off a hatful or more, the happiest man in the state of Mexico. He has bought fame, and got it cheap.

Meanwhile the cochetero, another sticker, despatches the prostrate bull by thrusting a small dagger into the nape of the neck just above the spinal column. The work is clumsily performed, and the little bull quivers and kicks and groans. At this one of his teasers twists the tail of the dying brute. That silly piece of cowardice is too much. Hot Southern curses from all about the circle pelt the author of this insult to a game actor, so lately master of the ring; and a venerable and staid Mexican in one of the boxes breaks a chair to express the indignation that words will not convey. It is a wonder that his example does not prove contagious. Such exhibitions of prevailing and destructive rage are not infrequent.

Thus the little red bull receives high honor in his death—but it is like plaudits sometimes given to men, late and unappreciated glory.

Reaction follows such tension as this has been, and fortunately we can open our box-door to a balcony which commands a view of the sunlit volcano, whose great, white head sparkles with rosy radiance in the western sun.

But shouts from within announce that another bull has entered. He is a big black fellow of only average spirit. The conditions of the fight have changed. The men who just now had more than they could manage on the defensive, act on the offensive; but interest in this speedily flags, and the bull is lassoed and stabbed in the spine. The mules drag off this bull, as they have taken away his two predecessors and the horse.

Another bull of good ability brings the matador into discredit by not permitting that dandy to stick him, the horsemen lasso him, and the butcher ends his torture.

One wonders what is done with the flesh of these creatures, but probably we shall eat steak to-morrow that has been killed in this way. Mexican beef, by the way, does not compare with ours in flavor; none of it is grain fed, and the pasturage does not seem to make juicy fatness.

The exercises of the day end with the introduction of a bull with balls on his horns, and the ring is thrown open to the boys, who flirt their serapes and practise to become bull-fighters.

The crowd disperse in good order, and the special train to the city of Mexico discloses not a sign of rowdyism. We get in town so as to dine most comfortably, after ten o'clock, in the French restaurant out of whose windows Maximilian's officers used to stare at the señoritas.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG MEN IN POLITICS.

I.

Appearance of the Mexican Mugwumps.

THE year 1884 developed the mugwump in Mexico, as it did in the United States, and what was a natural and inevitable outgrowth of your politics was a phenomenon here. Nevertheless, the bold, independent action of the young leaders in Congress, backed by the students of the republic, was not so surprising a thing, in fact, as it might seem on first thought. You will remember that the great middle class of sober, sensible, God-fearing citizenship is wanting here. Any protest against despotism and wanton extravagance or misgovernment must come from the top or educated class.

The last two years of the administration of President Gonzales had been corrupt and extravagant to such a ruinous extent that the finances of the country were disordered to the point of bankruptcy, and the people turned instinctively towards General Diaz for relief. The prosperity which he had fostered during the four years that ended in 1880 had been wantonly dissipated. It is probably a fact that Diaz was besought to take forcible possession of the government, as had been so often done before; but he said, in effect if not in words: "No. Let this man serve out his term. The maintenance of the orderly processes of law are worth more to Mexico than present succor." This gives emphasis to that passage in his message which says:

"For the second time since 1877 the transmission of the executive power of the republic has taken place at the close of the constitutional term, without any accident troubling the ceremony." To this the *Mexican Financier* appended: "He might have added that the peaceful transmission of power now occurs for only the third time in the history of the republic; and he might still further have added that it has occurred now because of the faith that the Mexican people have in his political and personal integrity."

In the closing weeks of General Gonzales' term he sought to convert the English debt by an issue of new bonds to the amount of $86,000,000. The will of the government in such matters had been law to Congress in the past, and this scheme was advanced as having the sanction of General Diaz. All the preliminaries had been concluded, and the matter was presented to the Chamber of Deputies for formal ratification. Objection there was, of course, unlooked for; the project was endorsed very generally by the business men of Mexico, and it had received the approval of a committee of the Chamber.

As studied in the light of the fate which overtook this measure, it is plain that the terms of the bill made possible great frauds and were not desirable in other ways. The details in proof of this are not essential now. It was another adroit opening for public plunder, greater than the more covert schemes that had brought a vast fortune to the soldier-president, and enriched his satellites and henchmen. To act on such a proposition at such a time would have been expected nowhere save in Mexico, but there it was confidently discounted.

That the measure met challenge and defeat means that it provoked a momentous but peaceful revolution, such as this half-baked republic never before had experienced. For the first time Congress asserted its constitutional prerogatives. It blocked and rebuked the executive, and refused to commit the country to a policy which was at least open to grave criticism. The story of those November debates has been told, but the historic scenes then enacted are well worth recalling now as illustrative of the new day that is coming to this hitherto turbulent country.

II.

The National Congress in Session.

The Senate convenes in the national palace, but the Chamber of Deputies is housed in the old theatre of Iturbide, over half a mile distant. Let us look in upon that body in session.

The old playhouse is dingy and smoke-clouded, for the honorable deputies puff cigarettes and cigars with tremendous assiduity. Even the veteran smoker who may sit among the spectators is moved to quote Daniel Pratt's famous remark, when the college boys undertook to "smoke him out"—"Gentlemen, your speaker is not a ham."

The ample stage is occupied by the president and secretaries, and above the desk and head of the presiding officer, who corresponds to our speaker, is a red-plush canopy which is surmounted with the gilded eagle of Mexico. Much of the floor of the house is left open, tiers of seats running around the semicircle. The members have no fixed abiding-places, but sit where they please. They are not provided with desks, and, having no very active constituents, do not vote themselves stationery and postage-stamps wherewith to write letters to the dear people. The once resplendent boxes are set apart for the reporters, who display nothing like the interest in the proceedings that would be shown by their brethren in any American legislative body. Their reports are usually confined to a very brief routine summary. Behind the dingy, gilded fronts of the three galleries spectators are at liberty to watch the proceedings of the lawmakers. The desk of the president is an elaborate structure on which stand brass candelabra, and the secretaries sit at long, green-covered tables on either side. Over the centre of the floor hangs a huge, old-fashioned chandelier that is a relic from the days of sperm candles. We passed a file of armed police on our entrance, and these guardians of the peace are posted here and there in the galleries.

Barring the smoking, and that is attended to in a dainty way, the decorum is absolute; no statesman ever tilts his chair back or places his feet on the railings, sports a toothpick or toys with his penknife; there is no tearing of papers, or clapping of the hands to summon pages. The *personnel* of the body is high. All are well dressed and of gentlemanly demeanor. No member wears the national costume, but all are clad in dark, European garments, topped off with a silk hat or Derby. The Aztec tinge is scarcely discernible, most of the deputies being as white as any body of American men. Among these picked representatives of the republic—lawyers, soldiers, scholars, and business men—are some striking faces, and inquiry shows that these belong to men who have made their mark here or elsewhere.

The president is Signor Limantaur, of French descent, who owns a palace on Profesa Street. He calls the body to order by ringing a bell. Soon the clerk is reading a communication from the minister of finance setting forth the state of the country, and he employs the same clear but monotonous tone that is characteristic of all reading clerks.

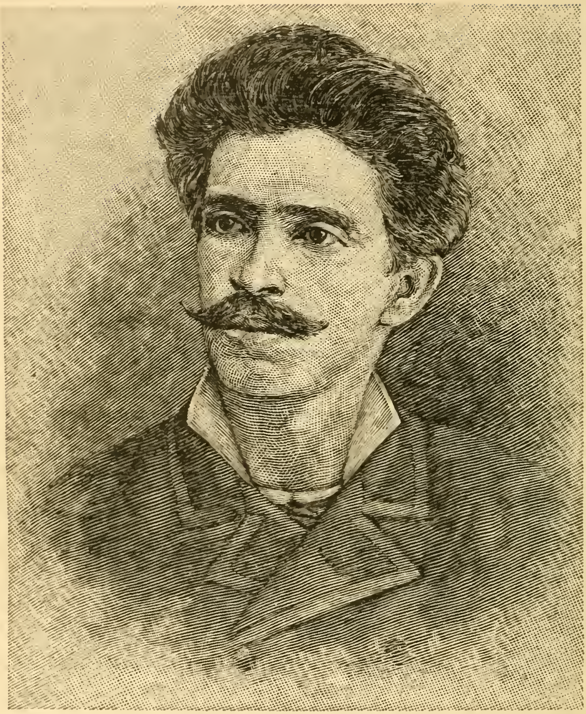
The oratory of this people is said to be impetuous, fluent, attractive, and somewhat wanting in solid qualities—more Celtic than Websterian.

III.

Diaz Miron and the Victory of the Students.

The astonishing corruption that had flourished under President Gonzales was talked about everywhere in 1884, but denunciation of it was confined to private speech. All men knew that the orator who should assume to tell the truth about this evil in high places would risk liberty if not life in the undertaking. No political campaigns for the discussion of men and measures and principles here precede a national election, and in a land habituated to military domination such free discussion will have to be a plant of slow growth under the best auspices. With a military man in the presidency, the hardihood of Diaz Miron, of Vera Cruz, the youngest member of the Chamber, in assuming to defy the government, will be appreciated. Men who dared in this way might look to find themselves in private life, or languishing in prison, or banished to Yucatan. Pretexts for such penalties are easy to find when an unscrupulous central power seeks them.

Knowing all that, this pale young lawyer, only twenty-six years old, decided to tell the truth. He took counsel of his own patriotism, crossed the floor, mounted the tribune, and faced the deputies—a thin-faced, mustached, feeble-looking boy, whose hair rose in a black shock—and began his attack on Gonzales and the agreement made in London for the conversion into new bonds of the old debt due English bondholders, in these words: "I rise to sacrifice ambition to honor. I abandon all hopes of entering Congress again rather than approve what will be the ruin of my country." In a rapid, nervous way, but with a voice



SALVATOR DIAZ MIRON.

that was heard all over the building, he exhibited the weaknesses of the pending agreement, and arraigned the president with unsparing severity for the misdeeds of the administration. It was a comprehensive indictment for which the bond question opened the way. He closed by moving to postpone the whole subject until after the inauguration of Diaz. In manner, in matter, and in effect it was a remarkable performance.

That speech gave Miron a backing such as no one would have looked for, and was the spark that fired the young life of Mexico with serious purpose, and woke it to instant action. Within twenty-four hours the students were organized against the government so as to constitute a new force in politics. They cheered Miron to the echo, aroused the people, and filled the galleries. Their enthusiasm carried them to the length of extreme disrespect to the supporters of the government bill, and the police were unable to quell their ardor during the many days over which the debate was continued.

Popular support was freely given to the students in their defiance of a government which had forfeited the respect of the governed, and this solid opinion, thus voiced, finally carried the day. The city was in a turmoil, the military was abroad, doors and windows were bolted and barred; but still the students paraded the streets and filled the galleries of the Chamber, and still the debate went on, the reformers fighting with brilliant courage. At the end of four days, by a vote of 94 to 58, the deputies refused to reject the report of their committee, and passed it to discussion, article by article. When the first article was broached the uproar became so great that the president lost all control of the Chamber. The rules provide that when the galleries cannot be kept in order the body may go into secret session, but when the Chair ordered this action the minority declared that they would break a quorum rather than submit, and so adjournment followed. The majority was steadily losing its strength under the power of public opinion, and at the end of the seventh day's debate the proposition urged at the opening of this remarkable conflict by young Miron was adopted, and the matter was postponed until the advent of President Diaz, and that by acclamation!

From a merely passive instrument in the hands of the president and commander-in-chief of the army, Congress had passed to the exercise of its constitutional liberty. It had for the first time appeared in the self-respecting rôle of a law-making body.

IV.

The Bloodless Revolution in Review.

It was a famous victory. I find business men who say that the provisions of the bond agreement were pretty fair as a whole, and who sharply criticise the conduct of the students in literally crying down the opposition. Certainly no body of American lawmakers would have tolerated such a high-handed proceeding; but conditions always qualify actions. Perhaps the significance of the demonstration was generally overrated, as it certainly was in some respects; but the impartial student of Mexican affairs may allow something of all this, and yet he will recognize in this outbreak of honest indignation and effective resistance a profound meaning.

These mercurial Southerners illuminated their city, made heroes of the students, saw Gonzales depart with a universal scowl, and welcomed Diaz almost as the saviour of his country. The Mexicans are strong in flashing out impromptu celebrations, and quick to seize opportunities for imposing but fleeting demonstrations; but they are pitiably weak in those stable and intelligent qualities that go to make up government by the people. The Indians sadly need schooling, and the educated classes lack training in the duties of citizenship.

There is said to be a movement under way to awaken more popular interest in the pending and future congressional elections. This rather tentative "movement" illuminates the vital deficiencies of republican government in Mexico. That really is little more than a shell as yet. Certainly it is far from being a living, responsive organism of the people who

> ". . . know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain."

The work that confronts statesmen here dwarfs by comparison similar problems now so well towards solution in the United States.

It is a cheering sign that the educated young Mexican has learned that misrule can be successfully thwarted without bloodshed, and that the power of public opinion is greater than an army. He should have discovered, too, that in patient organization and popular education lie the only sure hope for the perpetuation of a vitally free government. It was said that the young men proposed to band together all over the republic for future action; but the work that ought to have followed this brilliant but temporary achievement has probably not been systematically carried out. The Southern character would not be belied if the students failed to make the most of their opportunity for welding their influence into a permanent force. The union that is strength is not the growth of a week, however commanding the demands of that time may have been, and only organized vigilance is eternal enough to buy a first-class article of liberty.

V.

"Reform within the Party."

But the reform wing of the liberal party still exists and acts in the Chamber of Deputies as a powerful minority. One is interested in tracing the resemblances to American politics that exist here. The bugaboo of the Liberals is the Church party, now practically unrepresented in affairs.

The too-ardent advocates of Liberal regeneration are warned lest they imperil all by opening the door to the Church party. Your old, practical politicians look on Miron as a poet and an enthusiast; consider him as impracticable, in short, as old stagers in the United States declare the youthful mugwumps to be. Yet down in Vera Cruz Miron is very much respected. That state is intelligent and progressive, occupying somewhat the position in this republic that Massachusetts does in the American Union. Other reform Liberal leaders are Duret and Viñez.

These men are supporters of Diaz, and they would have Congress take measures looking towards a sharp and thorough investigation of the acts of the preceding administration; but the majority, who fear to disrupt the party and imperil the stability of the government, will not go with them. The reformers also insist that the government must throw its contracts open to public competition, that honesty and economy may prevail. These men would draw the line between the legislative and executive departments of the government, and thereby regain functions which have been usurped. They object to giving the president extraordinary powers, are opposed to militarism, believe in a republican form of government as a matter of practice, and strenuously hold that the time for a dictatorship has gone by. These young leaders of the opposition are idolized by the students. They were defeated on all important measures at the recent session of Congress, as they no doubt expected to be, and could afford to be. They wait on the progress of Mexico.

It is only eight years ago that Congress refused to grant a railroad charter to the frontier of the United States, in response to the address of an eloquent member who declared it to be "a natural law of history that border nations are enemies," that "nations of the North generally invade nations of the South;" hence "we should always fear the United States." He closed his speech in this way: "You, the deputies of the states, would you exchange your poor but beautiful liberty of the present for the rich subjection which the railroad could give you? Go and propose to the lion of the desert to exchange his cave of rocks for a golden cage, and the lion of the desert will answer you with a roar of liberty." Contrast that attitude with the position taken by the young Liberals of to-day, and you will understand the progress which Mexico has made.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE ITALY OF AMERICA."

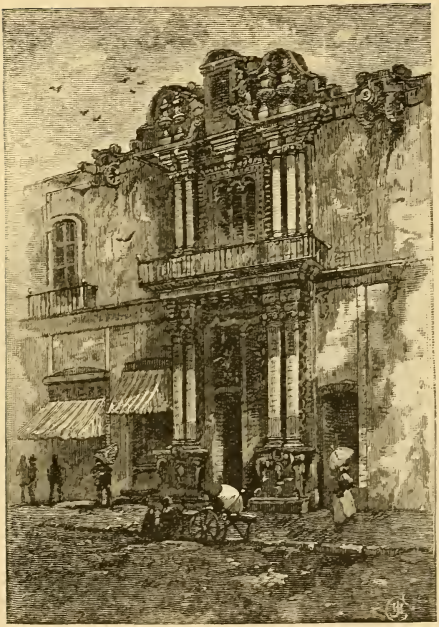
I.

A Famous Stamping-Ground for Tourists.

FREDERICK E. CHURCH, who painted "The Heart of the Andes," says that Mexico is the paradise of artists, "the Italy of America." He made his third or fourth visit in the winter of 1885–86, and though ill-health has laid a restraining hand on his work, the artistic sense remains full and strong and discriminating. It is pleasant to be reinforced by this expert opinion, for Mr. Church has pursued his studies in many lands, and the rich fruits of his travels have added to the art-wealth of the world; but no person of average intelligence can escape the conviction that on its picturesque side there is everything to be said in favor of this sunny country that is so prodigal in its coloring, so extravagant in riotous vegetation, and so unapproachable in its mountain scenery.

The life of the people takes on phases of character and of incident that must resemble Italy much, but Syria more. The similitude to Eastern life finds a curious recognition in the local tradition that Christ, returning again to the earth, wandered disconsolate over the unfamiliar countries of Europe only to seek Mexico as the spot which most reminded him of the scenes amid which he had before walked and suffered and died.

Every spot in the quaint old city of Mexico is made fas-



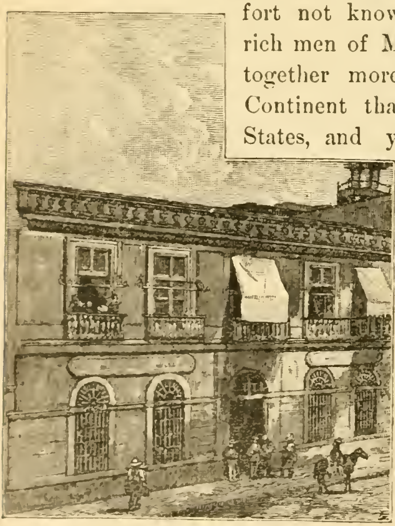
OLD SPANISH PALACE IN THE CALLE DE JESUS.

cinating by historic associations that run back to Cortez, the Montezumas, and beyond to a more exalted civilization than the Spaniards found; and can be made to illustrate all the successions of turmoil that have marked the vicissitudes of the way to this hour. With so much material lying all about him, the passing tourist can only gather something characteristic here and there that shall contribute to a fair general impression. To the antiquarian, the painter, the poet, the novelist—the specialist in all literature and art—Mexico is a treasure-house full of the richest chambers. The high human interest is not wanting—the antiquities, the history, and the legendary romance — but the knowledge that is to make the old and the new vital and living, to give them a fitting place in books and painting, is largely to come. Something has been done, but much more remains to be accomplished.

II.

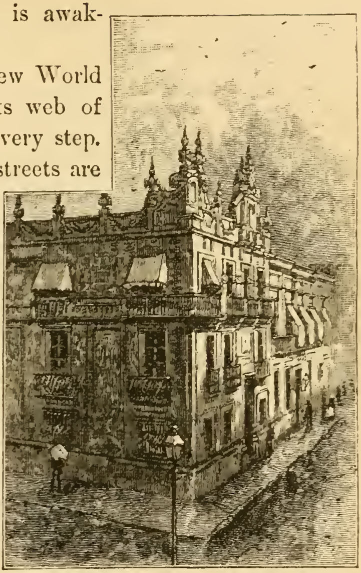
The Great Influx of Tourists.

More tourists will see Mexico the coming winter than during any previous season, and this is but the beginning of travel in this direction; while this most brilliant city on the continent is more truly than ever the capital of Mexico. Thither come visitors from all the states, lured to the federal district by the railroads, and making what was before a tedious journey, beset often by brigands, with a comfort not known in Europe. The rich men of Mexico used to be altogether more familiar with the Continent than with the United States, and your railroad enterprises have not only been instruments of enlightenment, but they have greatly tended to unify this nation. Whereas most people in Mexico were fated to live and die without having seen any state but their own, now they seek the chief city very read-


A TYPICAL HOUSE-FRONT.

ily, and national pride is awakened or deepened.

This Rome of the New World tangles the visitor in its web of historic association at every step. The very names of the streets are landmarks of history; the buildings are not only old and splendid in themselves and architecturally instructive, but they are often the work of the Spanish conquerors, while the relics of the people who antedated the Conquest appeal to us as something native to this continent. The flavor of this past belongs to us, and in remoter parts of the country it has lapped over into the present.



PORCELAIN HOUSE IN SAN FRANCISCO STREET.

It will be well to see Mexico before modern ways shall have effaced much or all of this and qualified the romance with too much of modern invention. From the Indian street life to the grand mountains that gird about the mighty plain with its great lakes, this city is full of artistic suggestion. The beggar, the water-carrier, the universal ass, the baby-laden mothers, the peon carrying his burden of fruit or fowls, the market scenes, the ladies out shopping or on their balconies, the Mexican as he emerges from some timeworn doorway—all these, with a hundred combinations of surrounding and color, tempt the brush as they delight the eye.

III.

Art among the Aztecs.

Art is at home here, and had found more than a rude expression hundreds of years before Puritan feet pressed the soil of New England. The Aztecs depicted events and recorded history by means of picture-writing, and when the Spaniards landed, in 1519, the accomplished painters of Montezuma transmitted to him the full and strange details of that event in a primitive *Harper's Weekly*. It is reasonable to suppose that their skill was greater than that which marks most of the pictures that now disfigure many daily newspapers, for the native ruler certainly gained from their work a very clear idea of what the artists intended to convey.

While the first bishop of Mexico made himself infamous by burning the best and most valuable Aztec manuscripts and paintings, one of the viceroys was sensible enough to employ learned Indians in the production of others, and the best examples of this early work on deerskin or maguey-paper are to be found in European libraries. Antiquarians make out some most interesting chapters of history therefrom, showing that the arts of metal casting, the manufacture of jewelry, and so on, passed from the Toltecs to the Aztecs; while the chief local events of the period from 1298 to the Conquest are said to be well defined.

The museum in the national palace would furnish abundant material for months of profitable study, its walls comprehending the three departments of natural history, archæology, and bibliography. The native Americans were famous workers in silver and gold, the products of their skill commanding the admiration of the goldsmiths of Europe; but nothing of this sort escaped the cupidity of the Europeans, who turned all such plunder into the melting-pot.

IV.

Filigree-work, Wax Figures, and Straw Pictures.

One distinctive legacy of native art that has been perpetuated from the most ancient civilization is the famous Mexican silver filigree-work. Nothing superior is made in the world, and crosses as delicate as any fretwork done by Jack Frost, and almost at times rivalling the web of the spider, are common in all sizes. Ladies' pins of characteristic designs, such as the open fan, the guitar, or butterfly; ear-drops of the most ingenious construction, scarf-pins, and hair ornaments, are familiar to jewellers everywhere.

Shopkeepers now cater to the tourist trade to such an extent that the *bric-à-brac* of the country can be bought in El Paso or Santa Fé at about the same prices that must be paid here, and, when the custom-house charges are added, the tourist will do quite as well to make most of his purchases on the American side of the border. The silversmiths of the days of Cortez were apparently buried years and years ago, and the jewelry of the shops has been imported. In the government pawnshop the tourist who covets "a bargain" may now and then light on something to delight his soul, but the gleaners in this field are many. Some of the serapes sold in the shops are of exquisite designs, the blending of colors being as rich and satisfying as the combinations of the Roman scarf. The lace mantillas found in the hands of professional curiosity venders are as expensive here as they would be in New York, but now and then a prize of this kind may be picked up that is worth having. An American resident showed me one that he had secured in a native shop for $4 that would be worth $100 in New York.

There are bookstores under the arcades scattered about town where the bibliomaniac may discover now and then tomes that are old enough to be almost priceless, and of whose value the vender has little conception. Finds of this kind are always regarded as fair prey by people with whom honesty is a principle to be rigidly practised in all other relations of life. The probability that the volume has been stolen helps to support their exception to the fixed rule of conduct.

The love of music and of art is born in these Indians, and the execution of both comes to them without training. The burst of song is as spontaneous, free, and delightful as in southern Italy, and the universality of the artistic sense seems a strange possession to find on American soil.

This is most characteristically exhibited in the wax figures that represent every phase of street life with minute fidelity. Over the carefully moulded wax is fitted a specially prepared cloth, the exact tint of the native complexion, and the figures are taken from life. The beggar, with his scarce concealed nakedness and carefully reproduced deformity, is petrified into miniature reality; the mother and her babe, suspended in the omnipresent reboso, are formed to perfection and clothed as in life; the venders of fruits and flowers carry their wares so colored by the untutored artist as to resemble the full-grown product; and the Mexican gentleman on horseback is a very centaur, full of prancing vigor. Habits and costumes are reproduced to perfection in these "rag-figures," as they are called.

Feather-work is another high Indian accomplishment, an heirloom from the Toltecs. The plumage of gorgeous tropical birds is combined to make feather pictures that are artistically constructed, if too evidently artificial to be pleasing according to a true standard of judgment.

More satisfactory are the straw pictures made by Indian women, who essay, with success, to reproduce in colors such subjects as the cathedral, a street scene, or a landscape. The perspective of these is often perfect, and the effect of distance is sometimes wonderfully reproduced.

V.

A Stroll among the Idols.

The rule of ancient priestcraft, whose despotism was cruel, malignant, and desperately ingenious, is powerfully exhibited in the idols that have survived the change of creed and the fortunes of the years. A great variety of these appear in the national museum, hideous but interesting, and most of the little idols sold in the shops are of modern construction—gods made useful in keeping the wolf away. The Aztecs had thirteen great gods, with little gods innumerable, and naturally enough the ruler of storms and the master of paradise had his earthly residence on old Popocatapetl. There is supreme art displayed in the chief of these graven images—supposed to be Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, though the question has long been debated whether this be not Teoyaomiqui, the goddess of death, but the character of the idol seems to decide clearly in favor of his being a male personage.

The art embodied here is that which commands fear from the beholder—and a great deal of strong character went into the making of this idol. These early impressionists knew what they were about. The unresponsive, cold, stern creation is formless—neither man, beast, nor bird—carved here and there into a semblance of head, hands, and feet, with now a dreadful eye and then a gigantic claw; the suggestion or mere hint of devilish form everywhere, but none of these intimations of life come to anything. The beholder is baffled, oppressed with the sense of many possibilities and the realization of nothing. Put one back to a period when the idea of a supreme being took shape like this and it is easy to see how dread and lively fear might fill the breast before a creation so indefinably commanding. "Believe or be damned" was the watchword of heathendom, as thus represented, the impelling motive that offered countless human lives and tore out the palpitating heart of the sacrificial victims to propitiate an offended deity.

This very image might have been perpetually drunk on human blood—if the shedding of it would suffice. Bernal Diaz, comrade of Cortez, saw this idol when Montezuma exhibited his city to the man who was to conquer it. Writes Diaz:

> "Here were two altars highly adorned with richly-wrought timbers on the roof, and over the altars gigantic figures representing very fat men. The one on the right was Huitzilopochtli, their war-god, with a great face and terrible eyes. The figure was entirely covered with gold and jewels, and his body bound with golden serpents; in his right hand he held a bow and in his left a bundle of arrows. The great idol had round his neck figures of human heads and hearts made of pure gold and silver, ornamented with precious stones of a blue color. Before the idol was a pan of incense, with three hearts of human victims, which were then burning, mixed with copal. The whole of the apartment, both walls and floor, was stained with human blood."

This ancient description does not quite tally with our alleged war-god, who was found buried in the great square in 1790; but perhaps Diaz did not spend much time in such a grewsome place. The war-god was buried again by the Spaniards, who feared lest the Indians might backslide from their new picture-worship; but in 1821 Huitzilopochtli was taken up for good.

Here, if anywhere, one can realize how despicable is the religion of fear, and by the side of this dead emblem of a dreadful past, and through the most natural association of ideas, one seemed to see Mark Hopkins twirling about on his classroom chair—benignant, clear, and masterful—expounding the new dispensation of "the Law of Love, and Love as a Law." Tenderness, affection, responsive human interest—the sunlight of intelligent action, of choice—and the dead shall live again! The new faith is better adapted to human needs.

VI.

Mexican Pottery and Wood-carving.

It will surprise those who are familiar with Mexico's notable contributions to ceramic art to learn that this industry is entirely unorganized, each Indian hut producing its own wares. The pottery comes chiefly from Guadalajara, Uruapan, and Zintzuntlan; in the first-named city, which is on the line of the Mexican Central Railroad, and in size and commercial importance is second only to the national capital, the beautiful glazed ware is made. This is ornamented in variegated colors that are as deftly applied as in any Japanese work.

Some of the mammoth vases are not only beautiful, but embody the local color in striking combinations. The national emblems of red, green, and white are draped about the golden eagle, with guns and drums as accessories, amid a bewildering but pleasing splendor of gold, deep blue, and yellow; the whole being harmonious and admirably characteristic. Then again flowers, deep-red roses, drawn and colored to perfection, are set against the deep-brown background for the neck of the vase, while its body will be covered with an Oriental sea-view wherein red-sailed ships float on a silver sea; the combinations are endless, but they are always highly decorative and artistic.

The real antique Aztec pottery, age-dimmed, and of fantastic shapes, is very scarce, though these clever Indians make an imitation that usually satisfies the tourist. It should be said that this ware possesses very small artistic merit.

The gayly-colored palm-leaf baskets are not unlike the handiwork of Indians nearer home, though the colors are richer, as this country abounds in dye-woods.

Choice embroidery, too, can be bought now and then, and the old needle-work is equal to any taught in the modern schools.

The independent Indian manufacturer of pottery packs his goods into a wicker crate about two feet square and six feet long, lifts this to his back, and departs on foot to sell his wares. He will often travel hundreds of miles and return happy in the proceeds of, say $15. Decorated water-coolers and bottles are included in his stock. The makers of clay images are entitled to much respect for artistic skill. It is said that, after a mere glance at a person, or even at a photograph, these born artists will make a bust which will be very lifelike in both form and feature.

Mexico possesses a wealth of native woods that is now almost wholly neglected. The Indians manufacture artistic table-tops that are a striking mosaic exhibit of these woods, but the furniture used in the cities is imported, and consequently commands most exorbitant prices. Wood-carving is indigenous, and some of the Indians deserve to be called artists.

Carlos Zaremba describes one such in the city of Cuernavaca, working in a small room with implements of his own make, and "carving a crucifix in wood, so highly artistic, with the expression of suffering on our Saviour's face so realistic, that any foreign sculptor of the highest renown would be proud to call it a creation of his own." The man who will organize this native facility, carve the abundant mahogany, rosewood, and ebony, and manufacture the results into furniture, would seem to have an opportunity for making money and at the same time rendering the world a service.

CHAPTER XIII.

A RUN INTO THE HOT COUNTRY.

I.

Limitations of the Climate.

Like a poultice for the tired nerves is a plunge into the hot country—tierra caliente—from this city that is thousands of feet higher than Mount Washington. One does not get adapted to new conditions at once, but in Mexico the driving Yankee has reached a country where haste is phenomenal. If one be pliable, and owns to a somewhat lazy nature, he speedily accepts a delightful sense of somehow being a prodigal who has reached home at last. But whether willingly or otherwise, every visitor will be made to understand that nature is bound to rebuke Northern ways.

He may pitch into sight-seeing, and labor to pack his all too brief days full of new thoughts and experiences; but the reactions are quick and sharp, and the over-energetic person pays the penalty of his imprudence. Nature is prodigal of her charms, but she is more ready as well with her penalties. The altitude is an intoxicant, and must be recognized as such. More sleep is necessary than with you, and a wise conservatism of labor yields more even and larger returns than come from that haste which wantonly wastes the vitality. All this is learned by experience, and hence the first glimpses of the capital may well be followed by idle repose down in the tropical regions. To "loaf and invite one's soul" under a coffee-tree, with the snowy summit of Popocatapetl piercing far up into the everlasting blue, only a little way off, makes an episode fit to color a lifetime.

II.

Native Character Illuminated.

Mexican character may be studied to advantage on the Interoceanic Railroad, over which we will pass a day's journey down into the state of Morelos. It was built and is owned and controlled by natives. They operate it on the mañana principle of going slow.

Interesting preliminaries have prefaced the departure, for the local journalist who conducts this expedition has secured the distinguished consideration of a free passage. The methods by which this has been accomplished are those that belong to the Latin peoples. A letter was sent to the manager of the road, which scrupulously bestowed on him every title to which he could possibly lay claim, expressed the ardent hope that he was enjoying the best of health, enlarged the same wish to cover the family, and by gradual approaches of the most complimentary nature reached the fact of an American visitor, and the request for "the usual courtesies." They came in the form of a written letter, which secured every possible attention from the conductors, and nothing probably could induce this gentlemanly manager to commit the discourtesy of issuing a printed pass.

The horse-cars that run from the central square of the city to the depot are pretty well filled, nearly a dozen American tourists being among the passengers. Some such display freshness by wondering whether they will reach the depot by eight o'clock, the time at which the train is advertised to start. As ample leeway is always allowed for the belated, one can observe things at leisure.

The good-natured peons who handle the freight that makes up the larger share of our load work with a pleasant listlessness that would infuriate a New England railroad man. It is evident, too, that their honesty is a matter of oversight. One bearded peon, whose noble head would pass current in any circle as stamped with intellect and sanctity, proves that things are seldom what they seem. He edges cautiously but steadily to the rear, keeping a sharp eye the while on the boss. Now and then, when hooking over a bag of freight, he rips the sacking so as to abstract some of the contents, which he deftly conceals in the bosom of a shirt that is amply protected by a voluminous serape. Even when knowing to the facts it is difficult to acknowledge the thief behind the saintly front of this imposing pilferer, and the man who would charge him with stealing must needs have a high article of moral courage.

III.

Mountain Views and Suggestions.

There is nothing luxurious about the shabby cars, that were made many years ago in Wilmington, Del., and have since cracked and faded under the fervid sun. The wooden seats of the first and second-class compartments of the same car are alike in hardness, the division simply allowing a choice of company; but the scenic compensations of the way are lavish to wantonness.

We pass out by the lakes along the old roadway that Cortez and his Spanish troops traversed, that was worn by the huge mule trains which carried across country the rich Eastern cargoes of the old galleons, and is still crowded with troops of loaded mules and donkeys. The narrow-gauge railroad passes through the mountain barriers that encircle the valley of Mexico, and then our course is southwest, or towards the proposed terminus of Acapulco, on the Pacific coast. No railroad ride in the United States, of course, equals this in the variety of climate and vegetation displayed, but it is also true that none opens grander outlooks of mountains, more varied combinations of lordly heights and fertile depths, vaster stretches of lowland—and yet no part of Mexico seems more like home. These lesser mountains are familiar. Here are the high regions of Vermont and New Hampshire intensified and produced on a grander scale. But the two snow-clad volcanoes—Popocatapetl and the Woman in White—awe with a sublimity that finds no equal east of your Pacific coast, and no counterpart there. They are the landmarks about whose bases the railroad appears to crawl on its studiously circuitous way. Their stern domination is increased by the intense whiteness of their summits, as seen in this high latitude.

Towns are scattered through this region of the highland, their chief attraction always being the church that crowns a hill. Now and then a valley extends away below the foot-hills, with fields of corn and grain. Then trees hide the brown sides of the mountains, and pines appear in abundance. Occasionally the cañons are eroded as in the bad lands seen on the line of the Union Pacific Railroad. The morning air had been brisk and bracing, like a September day in New England, but at high noon we are still winding in and out among the foot-hills, and the temperature differs little from that of the city.

IV.

Plunging into the Tropics.

After a leisurely wait for dinner the train pushes on a few hours to the brink of the hills whence we shall plunge down into the tropics. No other word will express the abruptness of the transition. The eye sweeps the wide range of hills, and the traveller is reminded of New England; he confronts the green valley that rolls in richness as far as the eye can see, and realizes that here is a new world. The track appears like a great summer toboggan slide in everything save the speed which it imparts. The tender green of the sugar-cane marks great estates, and testifies to the chief production of the region. Blue, pink, and purple-streaked morning-glories are made mad by this more than July heat, and they clamber wildly over the stone walls and luxuriant hedges. A yellow flower that resembles your ox-eye daisy in everything but color is more at home along this track than it ever could be in a by-path of Berkshire. Unfamiliar palms tower loftily, orange-trees are a commonplace, and coffee is to be seen as nature makes it. The houses of sun-dried bricks, with their thatched or tiled roofs, have lost their oddity, and anything else would be out of place; and the universal cotton dress and straw hat belong to the scene, as burdensome woollen clothing plainly does not. Thus we approach the delightful winter resort of Cuautla (Kwów-tlah).

V.

The Typical Town of Cuautla.

The depot is housed in a magnificent old church building, whose deserted cloisters are profaned by freight and startled by the shriek of the locomotive. It should be said, by the way, that on this Mexican-built road occurred the only railroad accident in Mexico that has involved loss of life. In 1881, when the line was first opened, a washout precipitated some two hundred soldiers into a ravine, the cars loaded with lime and rum caught fire, and the disaster was frightful enough to suffice until this time. The one necessity in railroad building here is to guard against the floods of the rainy seasons, as the Mexican Central people have been forced to discover.

Cuautla is a neat, thriving, well-kept town of about six thousand inhabitants, whose reliable charm is a model inn. The streets are well laid out and paved in cobble and blocks of stone. The one-story houses of the Oriental style are wholesomely kept and disclose no evidences of extreme poverty. The main street consists of shops and houses combined, but they contain no show-windows, and glass is conspicuous by its rarity. Thus it was in the city of Mexico before Paris fashions were introduced in trade and social life. The work done here seems like puttering to an American, and the chief native manufacturing industry is cigarette-making. Drug stores abound, for the Mexicans are great dosers, and, to judge by the placards, they indulge freely in American patent medicines.

Strolling down towards the plaza—the heat permits no rapid movement—the most conspicuous object is an unmistakable Yankee, who flits in and out of house after house. The spectacle is unique enough to be absurd. We wait and waylay this one live man, who proves to be a New York sewing-machine agent, who is selling his stock on the instalment plan! He has a carload of goods up at the depot, and is doing a thriving business. It is impossible to regard him with the approval that he fairly demands.

The plaza is a sunny abode of picturesque idleness, with a music-stand, fountain, tropical trees, and many flowers. On the stone benches around its borders peons laze to and from their daily tasks. The inevitable church and municipal palace confront each other across this garden, and from the balcony of his quarters the chief official of the town looks down with a bored air. Brown-faced soldiers in white uniforms lounge about the arcades that always project from these government buildings. No one appears disturbed or curious over the advent of strangers, who make themselves quite at home and seem to fit into the placid scene.

VI.

A Model Inn and a Glorious Sight.

The approach of sundown brings thoughts of dinner and speculations with regard to the local tavern, whose merits have been freely advertised by Mr. Church, the artist. Hotel de San Diego fronts on a small and neglected park, a long, one-story building. It is built around the usual patio, or courtyard, and into the surrounding porch open the ample guest-chambers. Landlord Victor Bouyer came over with the French army, but did not return with it. He married a Mexican wife, and has since been growing up with the country. His hotel-keeping ability equals that of Mr. Plumb, of Stockbridge, and he has the advantage of possessing a better house. The guest enters the combined office, barroom, billiard and reception room, that is some seventy-five feet long by forty broad, and cooled by the stone floor and walls. Beyond are the dining-rooms, and then the ample court. Our dinner is more Continental than Mexican—a delicious French soup, veal boiled with vegetables, roast beef, a delicate salad, frijoles or beans, sweetmeats, cheese, chocolate, and coffee—with excellent wine or beer, if the guest shall so elect.

To smoke, out in the moonlit court, with its fountain, one lordly palm, orange-trees and flowers, seemed bliss enough; but the landlord knew better. Submitting to his guidance we walk out into the night and leave the quiet town. Passing rich estates, over whose white walls the coffee-tree bends with its load of berries, one can pluck the green branches for a closer examination. Our guide pauses on a bridge that spans the stream whose waters, used for irrigation, make the wealth of the sugar plantations. No need is there for words. Up beyond the ravine, in the clear moonlight, white, subdued, in glorious relief, and dignity inexpressible, tower the two volcanic sovereigns of the continent.

VII.

The Tropical Winter Morning.

The nights are cool enough for refreshing sleep, and the morning opens like those rare June days that bless your bleak habitation, and yet our smiling landlord says that this is but the tame repetition of all days, save in the rainy season. One wakes because nature is astir. Out in the court a mocking-bird jeers at all the feathered creation, and sweeter songsters carol out of the fulness of their enthusiasm. The sun floods the court, and pours in warm and enticing through the open window above the barred door of one's chamber. A soft breeze is abroad that has passed over fragrant flowers.

The natives begin work almost with the sun, and the song of a busy cooper near at hand keeps time to his rhythmic taps. For an hour the Indian women have been sweeping about the patio with a noisy rush broom, or have occupied themselves about the preparations for that light breakfast of eggs, rolls, and coffee that is both Parisian and Mexican. All give us their cheery morning greeting, these true Southrons, whose universal courtesy is in delightful contrast to Northern frigidity. The breakfast-room is cool, fresh, and sweet; open to the air and the court. It is a day begun as few can be anywhere in this world of woe and work and tired folk.

VIII.

Sugar-making in a Convent.

The morning is devoted to visiting the principal sugar-mill of the vicinage. In the yard of the stately old church, now desecrated by railroad offices, we find a canvas-covered car with two mules attached in tandem fashion, and a smiling peon. He smokes, and a cigar coupled with the suggestion that we would like to ride home with him draws out a most cordial invitation to jump aboard. Soon the car is spinning up a narrow spur track, the mules galloping past miles of cane. Men are busy opening the irrigating ditches, and study of the cane makes it apparent that this cannot be the season for making sugar. The judgment is confirmed when we reach the mill.

This is a grand estate, with a noble old monastery that is now equipped as the centre of a sugar plantation. Here is an independent community, the walls of which enclose some six acres, and cover a considerable portion of this space with buildings whose masonry will defy time. The man who bid in this property when the liberal government condemned and sold it got a prize—but it is safe to presume that the government held the poor end of the bargain. It always did in such transactions. In one section of the great yard are blacksmith and wheelwright shops, and the sugar-making machinery invades the old arched cloisters. This is all of French make, and the manager is of that nationality. Now he employs but forty men, who are engaged in shipping the cones of sweetness; but in January, the busy time, four hundred hands will be engaged in turning the ripe cane into the finished product.

The Church set these enduring buildings on high ground, and the spectacle of the long, green fields intersected by the sparkling irrigating ditches is worth coming to see. Great bunches of golden and blue flowers skirt the green, and trees ablow with white blossoms are a conspicuous addition to the scene.

The silent factory does not detain one long, and when the car is filled with sugar we crown the load, the amiable peon swings his lash about the ears of the willing mules, and they gallop back to town. There a little toll to the charioteer makes him a lord among his fellows.

CHAPTER XIV.

MEXICO'S PAINTINGS AND STATUES.

I.

The Indian Leadership in Higher Art.

THE artistic sense as found in the Indians is so pleasing, essential, and universal—just as naturally a tropical blossom as the mammoth roses—that one approaches the cultivated arts with some apprehension lest so much promise be not paralleled in the higher fields. It is better so, for this attitude of mind prevents any disappointment, and heightens the enjoyment of much that is worthy of recognition here or anywhere.

The national development in painting is very considerable, boasting both a past and a present. The future ought to be still better, as it will open the door to larger opportunities. As the fortunes of Mexico improve, the market to which the artists can appeal will no doubt be increased; but it must be said that buyers of pictures are not many as yet. The pulque-shops take some "pot-boilers," but there is a much steadier demand in Mexican homes for plate-glass mirrors than for canvas, and the extent to which these glasses are used in private houses must make them resemble the interior of a Hudson River steamboat. In the government pawn-shop, by the way, there are very many mirrors in pledge, of broad expanse and the widest gilt bordering, while the paintings are comparatively few and of a cheap and tawdry description.

The artists of Mexico were represented at the centennial exposition at Philadelphia, at the Boston exhibition of the New England Mechanics and Manufacturers' Institute in 1884, and also very generously at the late exhibition in New Orleans. The Philadelphia display was full and representative of the old and new, giving those who studied it almost as good an idea as may be obtained from the national school of fine arts in this city, the Academy of San Carlos.

II.

The Academy of San Carlos.

This institution is housed close by the National Museum. It was founded in 1781, and, through a gift of $40,000 from King Charles III. of Spain, was equipped ten years later with a fine collection of antique casts. Of these Humboldt wrote: "We are astonished at seeing here that the Apollo of Belvedere, the group of Laocoön, and still more colossal statues have been conveyed through mountain roads at least as narrow as those of St. Gothard." The first and second galleries contain the paintings of Mexican artists of the old school, specimens of the European schools appear in the third gallery, and the fourth and fifth rooms are devoted to the modern painters of Mexico.

One naturally seeks first the pictures that have crossed the water, both from their intrinsic interest and a desire to trace the influence which they have exerted on local art. There are some great paintings in this academy. The "St. John of God," by Murillo, is a replica of that in the church of the Caridad in Seville. Two other undoubted Murillos are claimed by Mexico—"The Virgin of Bethlehem," in the cathedral here, and the "Puresima," in the cathedral of Guadalajara. Here is also a "Saint Sebastian," attributed to Van Dyck; a large "Descent from the Cross," by Rubens, is perhaps a copy; there is a "St. John the Baptist," by Ingres; three paintings are credited to Leonardo da Vinci; there are two pictures by Guido Reni; two are said to be by the elder Teniers, and Charles Vernet contributed "The Olympic Games."

The Church was the great patron of art in all the early days, and she has been since despoiled of such possessions in many ways. The American invaders carried off a good many paintings, though our soldiers were probably not very intelligent plunderers. Many of the so-claimed old masters that turn up in loan collections in various localities have come down from soldiers in the Mexican war, and are generally old copies of great paintings. It is possible that an original may exist among them, but the probabilities are the other way. The internal revolutions and outside invasions helped to scatter the belongings of the churches, many of them going to Europe, and the liberal confiscation completed the job.

III.

The Creditable Work of Native Painters.

When the Church was the chief buyer it appears as a matter of course that the ancient Mexican masters followed Old World models in treating of severely religious subjects—and not afar off, either. The most meritorious work was done in the seventeenth century. Some of the subjects will illustrate the drift of the period: "Apparition of the Holy Virgin," by Nicholas Enriquez; "Assumption of the Virgin Mary," by Vazquez; "Interior of the Convent of Bethlehemites," by Carlos de Villalpandi; and "Holy Spring in Guadaloupe," by N. Caballero. The early school was practically bounded by church and convent walls, but within the range of subjects fitted to hang thereon its tendency was highly decorative. Luis Juarez revels in rich accessories.

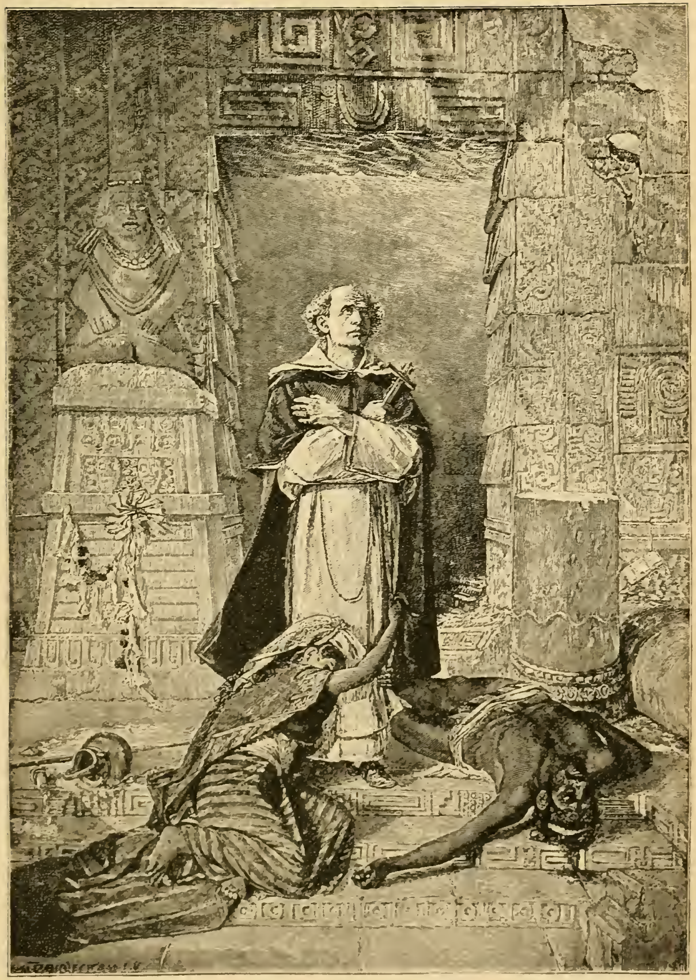
The fourth and fifth galleries epitomize the present of art, and it is apparent that the strongest men of the period find their inspiration at home. Some of these specimens of modern work are genuine and strong, impressive and valuable in subject and treatment, and full of the best promise. The landscapes of Jose Maria Velasco have more than a local reputation, and at Philadelphia he was "commended for merit as a landscape painter, as displayed in his picture entitled 'The Valley of Mexico.'" He is a master of distance, and reproduces with wonderful fidelity the great valley as it lies under the brilliant sun.

The painting most praised at the Boston exhibition, by the way, was "The Beggars," exhibited by A. Vargas, of Chihuahua, who thus dealt with a phase of life that is omnipresent in Mexico.

We have seen enough of this country to understand that its history abounds in the most striking situations, and the old life offers a mine of artistic suggestions. This is being worked with some noble results. The chief ornament of the academy, one that has been praised in extravagant terms by competent art critics, is the painting by Felix Parra, entitled "Las Casas Protecting the Aztecs." It is not only a most worthy monument to the good friar of Chiapas, famed for self-sacrificing championship of his oppressed people—the fit embalming of a strong and just character—but the painting embodies more than greatness in sentiment, skill in drawing, and harmony of coloring. It proves beyond peradventure that the universal artistic sense that is the Indian birthright is capable of the highest development, and that it finds best expression in dealing with its own proud ancestry. The same young Indian artist has produced another worthy painting—more ambitious in subject, and less effective in execution, but still great — that possesses historical interest. This is the "Massacre in the Temple."

When Cortez, inflamed by the misdirected and most costly tributes that Montezuma had forwarded to meet the Spaniard and turn his feet back to the coast and away from the Aztec capital, pushed on to the residence of the king, and there heard of the arrival of the ships and troops sent against him from Cuba, it will be remembered that he personally departed to meet the detachments despatched by Velasquez, the governor. In the capital, however, he left Alvarado at the head of the troops that remained. That impetuous person professed to believe that the Aztecs were plotting against the Spaniards, and therefore he directed the troops to fall upon and slay the assembled native nobles, their wives and children. This ruthless butchery is now depicted on canvas with power and feeling.

The scope and value of Parra's work justly earned him a scholarship from the local academy, and he has been given the advantage of foreign training. It is to be hoped that this will not wean him from the individual career so well begun before he had seen any country but his own. Other Indians who achieved success as painters were Jose and Luis Juarez and Cabera—the latter bringing in a new period of Mexican art at the end of the seventeenth century. Ibarra, Arteaga, Juan and Nicholas Rodriguez were painters of excellence. Indian blood certainly predominates among the artists of Mexico. Many paintings executed during the last twenty years show the effect of French teaching.



LAS CASAS PROTECTING THE AZTECS.

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IV.

The Remarkable Monument to Juarez.

Over the bones of Juarez, president and reformer, "the Washington of Mexico," as he has been frequently termed, is a tomb the most exacting soul might envy. As a work of art it is fine indeed, but as the tribute of an Indian sculptor to the great Indian statesman it is magnificently impressive. Out beyond the Alameda, in the Panteon of San Fernando, is the resting-place of many of Mexico's illustrious dead, and the eternal fitness of things in God's acre is kept when the richest tribute that sculpture could bring rises above the grave of Juarez. This monument is the work of Manuel Islas, who has succeeded in the most difficult of all fields. The unvarying testimony of those who visit the cemetery might be quoted in proof of this claim, and certainly no monumental effort in the United States tells such a story of heroic grief or so immortalizes the dignified emotion of a nation. A small but well-proportioned Grecian temple, surrounded by rows of columns, contains the commemorative group of spotless marble—the dead president lying at full length with his head supported on the knee of a female figure representing Mexico. It is the most simple and natural thing in the world—after it is done; and yet the United States has scarcely a memorial of dead greatness that does not seem conventional, heterogeneous, and strained beside it, scarcely one in any degree so good in its technical qualities, or so satisfying as a work of art.

This Panteon is a walled and paved city of the dead, with courts and arcades, a place of tombs and not of graves and dreary "tombstones."

V.

America's First Bronze Statue.

The first heroic bronze statue cast in America—that of Charles IV. that adorns the west end of this city—has not been surpassed since. This will be deemed an extravagant statement, but so far as the bronzes that are exhibited in the chief cities of the United States enter into competition, it seems to me that this Mexican work easily holds its own to-day. It was made in the days of the viceroys. The royal deputy who was in power in 1795, the Marquis de Branciforte, requested the privilege of setting up an effigy of his sovereign, and the boon was granted on the last day of November. The opportunity of celebrating a not very fine-looking king was given to Don Manuel Tolsa, who made the most of it, and the casting of his work was undertaken by Don Salvador de la Vega. Horse and monarch were executed in a single piece, about thirty tons of metal entering into their composition, and the result came out without defect August 4, 1802. It required fourteen months to finish the work, which was unveiled December, 1803, on the Plaza Mayor. When the feeling against Spain ran high in 1822, the statue was boxed up to hide it from the wrath of the people; two years later it was taken down and placed in the patio of the university, and in 1852 popular sentiment had so changed that the statue was reared again in its present position near the Alameda.

The horse and rider are fifteen feet nine inches high, and belong together. Those who deem the effect heavy may base their criticism on the great breast development of the animal, which is a noticeable peculiarity of all horses in this high land—and it might be argued that the Spanish king did not ride a Mexican horse; but the composition is admirable, and the action of the horse is to the life. The king is in classic dress, wearing a wreath of laurel, and holding in his right hand a raised sceptre, and the horse is at a slow walk, the left fore-foot and the right hind-foot being raised. The whole effect is natural and dignified, and gives the ideal of kingly progress. The solid certainty of the whole affair is the furthest possible remove from the crazy horsemanship and absurd posturings of certain notorious American statues. This statue deserves to rank with the tomb of Juarez as the best of their kind that Mexico can show. Humboldt, by the way, declared that this equestrian statue had but one superior, that of Marcus Aurelius.

VI.

A Grand Avenue and its Memorials.

The bronze sceptre of Charles IV. points to the westward along the most magnificent avenue of the city, the Paseo de la Reforma, that ends at the hill and castle of Chapultepec. It represents Maximilian at his best, and is the enduring mark that he has left on the face of an inhospitable city. There is much to admire and respect in the character of the dead "emperor," a man of amiable nature whose purposes comprehended in a vain dream of power many benefits for Mexico. He held the French idea of employing the people on public works. To him we owe the impetus that is developing the new part of the city on higher ground than the old. He laid out a number of avenues hereabouts, the chief of which, described above, is about 4000 yards long, with a width of 170 feet. Six circular spaces on the Paseo de la Reforma, each 400 feet in diameter, are set apart for the occupation of monuments to eminent men.

The first is filled by an elaborate tribute to Christopher Columbus that is primarily remarkable as having been reared at the expense of a resident of the city. Such a conspicuous instance of public spirit is notable in a place where great wealth is accustomed to seek seclusion and shrink even from the hazards of legitimate business enterprises. Don Antonio Escardon is a name worth remembering, for he was a leading spirit in procuring the construction of the Vera Cruz railway. He commissioned the French sculptor, Cordier, to execute this monument, which is much commended, but by the side of the works already reviewed seems too elaborate to leave the one direct impression of power. Here is an historical puzzle rather than a great idea simply expressed. Still the work is artistically good, if puzzling in detail, and all-embracing in conception.

Crowning the whole is the heroic figure of Columbus in the act of drawing aside the veil that hides the New World. Let us study the memorial up to its admirable culmination. The base is a quinquangular platform of basalt surrounded by an ornamental iron balustrade from which rise five gas-posts with branching lanterns. Above the centre of this base rises a square mass of red marble ornamented with four *basso-rilievos*—the arms of Columbus, surrounded with garlands of laurels; the rebuilding of the Spanish monastery of Santa Maria de la Rabida; the discovery of the island of San Salvador; and the fragment of a letter from Columbus to Raphadi Sauris. Above the *basso-rilievos,* surrounding the pedestals, are four priestly, life-size figures—two of Spain and two of men who came to America — Padre Marchena, guardian of the monastery above mentioned, and Padre Fray Diego Dehesa, confessor of King Ferdinand, men who kept Columbus in royal favor; and Fray Pedro de Gante and Fray Bartolome de Las Casas

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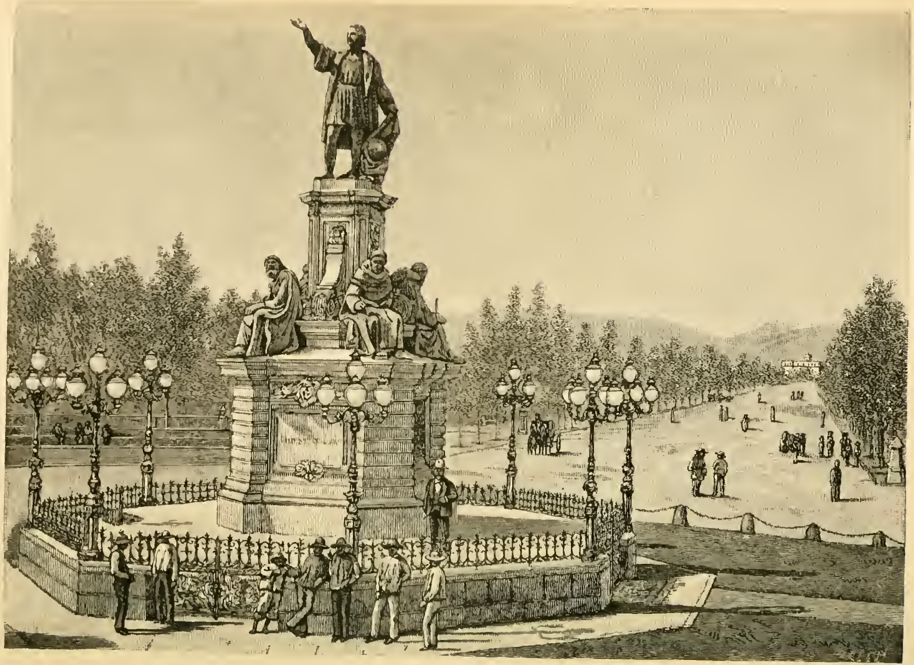


THE MONUMENT TO COLUMBUS AND DRIVE TO CHAPULTEPEC.

—the latter of whom painter Parra has made immortal—the two missionaries who most earnestly befriended the Indians.

In the second space of the lordly avenue the foundation awaits the setting-up of a completed statue of Guatemotzin, the last of the Aztec emperors, a man of far more strength of character than his uncle, the last of the Montezumas. When the latter proved a weak tool in the hands of the Spaniard, Guatemotzin rallied the Aztecs and fought with desperation until overpowered. When the city fell the emperor sought flight in the royal barge, but he was overhauled by the swifter vessels that Cortez had constructed. The conqueror received Guatemotzin on the terrace of a temple, and the latter said: "I have done, Malintzin, that which was my duty in defence of my kingdom and my people; my efforts have been of no avail, and now, being brought by force to you a prisoner, draw that poniard from your belt and stab me to the heart." He bared his breast for the thrust Cortez would not give. The latter afterwards demanded of his prisoner to know where the imperial treasures were concealed, and, being met with a refusal, the feet of the emperor were soaked in oil and burned over a slow fire. A companion, the cacique of Tezcoco, who was subjected to the same torture until he died, groaned in his extremity, and it is related that the unhappy emperor reproved him, saying: "Do you think I am on a bed of roses?" Guatemotzin survived that ordeal to be hanged by Cortez.

The third monumental space on the avenue will be devoted to Cortez. The historical sequence of the series is most striking. First, the discoverer of America; second, the last native emperor; third, the remorseless conqueror—men truly representative, widely diverse in character, the leaders of epochs!

CHAPTER XV.

SOME FEATURES OF CITY LIFE.

I.

A Bohemian Paradise.

THE Bohemian who could not spend many pleasant months in this city would not be much of a "rustler." That expressive word has been coined by Western ranchmen to describe cattle who can be relied upon to care for themselves under all circumstances. They will "rustle" for feed under the snow, and drift before a storm to some natural shelter, when less enterprising stock would give up and die. Judging by much that is written about Mexico, rustling tourists are rather the exception.

The people who discover that life here is totally different from the Puritan civilization and Yankee ideas of comfort argue all things from what they have been accustomed to. The march of improvement to them means the introduction of the American style of house in place of the stone casa built about a court. One sees a disturbing number of such—positive people, without sentiment or imagination or intelligent reasonableness, who are doubly exasperating because they never harbor a suspicion of being absurd. Even missionaries sometimes seem to have expected to find here the virtues that bloom along the Connecticut River, instead of the Roman Catholic laxities that mark the unprogressive civilization of the St. Lawrence River. It is the Old World and not the best type of the

New, to be sure, but not differing, in its essential conditions, from much that may be seen in the very heart of Europe.

The citizen of the world would be very much at home here, but there are a great many excellent people who could not be. Many such have come and gone and written down their doleful experiences; others are now here, and more are coming—a melancholy procession of misfits. The intelligent Mexican accepts these mourners with a good deal of patience, but who shall blame him for looking on them as the plague of the locusts, an uninvited and unwelcome element of desolation and injury.

II.

An Eighteenth-Century Landlord.

There is a charm about the hotels, an air of substantial respectability that belongs to age, and has no affiliation with those gorgeous establishments in American cities wherein the "stunning" clerk is autocrat supreme. The venerable stone walls, that are often adorned with dingy sculpture, have settled into a character that solicits confidence and repose of mind, and the general homelike unobtrusiveness of the inn soothes the restless soul.

The time-worn and rather shabby old party who presides over the office is amiably interested in you, but he never becomes aggressive, and his attention is a passing affair. His habit of mind is illustrated by the reply given to the agent of an American excursion party, who applied for quarters at the hotel kept in what was the palace of the evanescent Emperor Iturbide. "How much are your rooms a day?" asked the brisk American. "Four dollars," returned the clerk. "But I shall bring you eighty people," said the advance agent, with confidence. "Four dollars and a half, in that case," returned the serene old party of the second part; "that makes more trouble!"

The affectionate interest with which the philosophic mind must regard the eighteenth-century poise of a landlord who argues like that was not shared by the wholesale applicant for rooms. The incident only intensified his relentless Americanism.

But we have kept our old hotel clerk waiting quite too long—not that he minds it, for he has not turned a hair, and is counting the flies that come and go in an unbusiness-like but truly Mexican fashion. He sees the traveller register and calmly despatches him, by the hand of a mozo, up the flight of stone steps to where the guardian of the keys and letter-boxes reduces his trust by one; and then we toil up two more flights of stairs to a fine old room on the topmost of the circumscribing galleries. It is sunny and cheerful, and opens to a balcony over the interior court that is bridged by the blue sky. The view is pleasant, offering beneath a summer-house, tropical vegetation, and a fountain basin that is covered with green slime and suggests malaria.

Thereafter, as one passes in and out of the hotel, the custodian of the key will smile and be unintelligibly courteous in Spanish; but to the antique clerk below the guest became an established fact when he chalked the name on a blackboard for public inspection.

One feels like a marked man. The government agent has taken your name on the cars, the newspapers have announced you to the city, and the local servant of Cook's agency, who is also a vender of *bric-à-brac*, has sent you a cordial invitation to make his store your headquarters. He angles well, and, in the enthusiasm aroused by first glimpses of the quaint city, the inexperienced traveller is likely to make purchases that are not well considered.

But before leaving the hotel let us not forget one of its most indispensable features. The chambermaids are mozos, or male Indians. Our particular mozo, ever hopeful of fees, as deft and knowing a valet as ever served the most pampered scion of the effete monarchies, is quick to establish friendly relations. These fellows can be hired in the city for $3 a week to give you undivided service, and they are a feature of Mexican life that fit like a glove to the necessities of a lazy man's vacation.

III.

A Tour of the Restaurants.

To and from such agreeable hotel surrounding—our contract stipulating $10 a week for room-rent—the Bohemian can move to ever-varying fields of investigation. Hotel prices, by the way, are very high as a rule. The restaurants first claim attention, and they will delight the knowing palate. Indeed, they merit almost unqualified praise for number, variety of resources, and service. French, Italian, German, Mexican, and even American cooking may be obtained for the seeking—if any one has the poor taste to desire the latter. The well-trained waiters everywhere expect the fee of a medio. If one desires meat for breakfast that will be an extra and a difficult one to get; and the most inveterate New-Englander soon learns to thrive on his coffee, roll, and egg.

Tourists naturally seek to combine sight-seeing with dining by sitting at the street window, and squeamish people will thus suffer a disappointment. The Indian beggar outside, whose deformity is his capital, and who never means to diminish that by removing any dirt, will, ten chances to one, press his nose against the glass and eye your meal with attention that must prove somewhat revolt-ing to the most reliable stomach. He may also occasionally depopulate his head. If the restaurant discipline prevents his pressing inside with personal appeals or proffers of lottery-tickets, you will suffer only through the eyes. The fruit-peddler holds an invisible free pass to all restaurants, and if one desires to top off with oranges, bananas, or some of Mexico's unique fruits, he buys of the Indian hawker.

The forager in the restaurants will range among types of character that enable clever students of human nature to sample all phases of male society in a cosmopolitan city.

IV.

The Markets, Old and New.

Every town has its great market-place, usually a large building filled with Indian sellers—men, women, children, and babies—of all the local products of the earth, and those varieties of merchandise that appeal to the people. Up at Toluca, for example, the market building is better than that in the capital of the United States, besides being more neatly kept and generally more attractive. Between the ragged and shiftless negroes of Washington and the Indians of Mexico, the latter make the best appearance; their wants are more simple, and the artistic sense that governs their costume gives them an individual standing. When they begin to adopt cast-off garments of European style some critics of Mexico will feel better, but the charm of a picturesque civilization will be broken.

The greatest market of the capital, and therefore of all Mexico (there are several others in the city), is the Volador, south of the national palace that occupies one side of the great central square of the city. It covers historic ground that once lay near Montezuma's "new home," and thereby was part of the plunder that fell to the share of

Cortez. Thither, by decree of the Ayuntamiento in 1649, the bakers, fruit-sellers, and pork-dealers were ordered from the Plaza Mayor. For some two hundred years the city paid rent for the use of this market-place to the heirs of Cortez, but in 1837 the property was bought for $70,000.

As a spectacle the market will be found a very fascinating place in itself, and because the utmost of historical interest hangs about it. Bernal Diaz, the companion of Cortez, who writes so graphically of ancient Mexico, assures us that the market-place of the original city did not greatly differ from what we see to-day—the chief change being that now no male and female slaves are on sale. The fruits of the soil and the results of individual labor have been repeating themselves for hundreds of years. Men have died, but others do the same things from generation to generation.

V.

Indian Character Illustrated.

Here, as impressively as anywhere in Mexico, appears the tireless and mechanical iteration that marks the Indian as an unprogressive human animal, and shows him to be, in lower life, the same child of nature as the uneducated negro of the Southern States of the United States. The Aztec sold fowls, game, vegetables, fruits, articles of food ready dressed, bread, honey, and sweet pastry when Diaz saw him—and he does the same to-day. There is no more organization about it now than there was three hundred years ago. Each Indian works for himself and sells when he wants money. Up from the hot country he passes to the city, traversing fifty or sixty miles a day, with a back load of chickens, baskets, poultry, wooden bowls, or other salable stuff. Often the whole family make the trip and camp out on the flags of the Plaza or the market-house, guarding little piles of fruits or vegetables—beans, carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, radishes, beets, potatoes, or squashes—until the load has been disposed of.

It will be seen that the city is thus dependent on the caprices of the Indian venders. If the people who raise potatoes or carrots do not happen to be in crying need of funds, it sometimes happens that there is a raging scarcity of those or other articles. There is no thrift or forehandedness about these Indians, and the half-dollar more or less that represents the sum total of a venture of this kind is squandered with reckless rapidity. The prospector of mining days wanted few provisions and much whiskey, and the peon adopts the same thoughtless and wanton policy—a little cloth and much pulque. The results are seen even in the very articles he barters. The stock has not been cultivated, and his vegetables are often withered and small and "run out."

A first-class market-garden in the hot country would be a boon to this city, but when it comes the peons will probably assert "the rights of labor" against such a wholesale aggression of greedy capital, and they are not likely to do it any more brutally than have the strikers of countries that boast their higher civilization.

VI.

Rents, Domestic Economy, and the Servant Question.

After studying the markets it is natural to investigate somewhat the perplexities and problems of domestic life, and housekeeping is discovered to be both difficult and expensive for those who bring to it the standards of the States.

This is revealed in the first step. Rents are high, prices being apparently about double those paid in New England cities. We are assured that this is one result of the coming of the railroads. House-owners willingly accepted extreme representations concerning the benefits that were to follow the advent of the iron horse, and doubled their prices accordingly. The result is a good many vacant houses, but the landlords show no disposition to lower rents; their property is untaxed when vacant, and they wait. This policy results in an indirect benefit by driving people to cheap and comfortable quarters in the suburbs, where life and property are safe now that the bandit has become a tradition. The selfishness of the old-quarter landlords, too, will assist the development of the west end, where improved dwellings are being built.

The servant question is a complicated one, though not from the same causes that operate in the United States. The market is full to overflowing with "help," such as it is; but the Yankee housewife does not tackle to it kindly. She can never find a maid-of-all-work. The lines that divide servants are as stiff and ineradicable as those that exist among the stateliest aristocracy.

First in point of necessity comes the porter. He is the guardian of the great front door, keeps the patio or court in order, sweeps out the saloon, trims the lamps, buys your pulque, acts as general errand boy, and waters half of the street in front of the casa. He is paid $3 a week or more, "keeps" himself, and sleeps on a mat laid upon the stones under the stairway. Promptly at six o'clock he closes and locks the house, puts up the chains, and seems to sleep with one ear open. He is always good-natured about letting you in, however. Some families permit him to lodge a wife and family under the stairs.

The cook is the autocrat of the establishment the world over, but here her position is unquestioned. She is paid $1 a week, with an allowance of 12 cents for food, and bosses everybody. The servants are not supposed to eat food prepared for the family, and they prefer native fodder to American dishes. Washing is an extra, done at public tanks in cold water, the clothes being beaten on stones and naturally wearing out quickly. It is not good form for the mistress of the house to go to market, and the cook buys all the household supplies. This gives her an abundant opportunity for cheating, which she improves with a dexterity that makes detection next to impossible. One might listen to her bargains and yet be certain that she had arranged a private "divy" with the huckster. A recent change of cooks in an American family revealed the fact that a former "treasure" had been charging exactly double on most of her purchases, and she is now living on her easily-earned wealth. All cooking is done over charcoal fanned to a glow. The Indian cooks heartily despise American dishes, but learn to prepare them in very good shape. Some of them excel with training.

The bread consumed in the city is all bought at the public bakeshops and made in the French way. Each day opens a new chapter in domestic affairs, only provisions enough being bought to last through, so that at night the larder is as bare as the cupboard of Mother Hubbard. There is no "trust" in Mexico, and the head of the house who neglects to leave a pile of silver dollars with his wife produces a famine in short order. The grocer, meatman, charcoal-vender, and fruit-dealers all do a cash business, and no money no food.

A few rich men have a practical monopoly of the meat business. The beef of the city is brought from Vera Cruz and Guanajuata, about two hundred head a day being killed, cattle being worth from $24 to $45 a head. Mutton is in universal use, and is better than the beef. Some choice carloads of mutton have lately been shipped through from New Mexico at a good profit. One rich man controls the pork market, and the extent of his monopoly is shown by the fact that he hires seventy-five telephones, which place him in communication with dealers who act as his agents. This monopolist also makes the tallow-dips that are in universal use among the poorer people. The better class of candles, by the way, are imported from France and Germany; and the enterprising American who will take a bright Mexican partner and go into scientific candle-making ought to be in the way of making money.

There are no good fish in the market; but the game is excellent. The necessaries of life are much higher than in the eastern cities of the United States, with good butter selling at $1 a pound, milk 20 cents a quart, tea $2.50 a pound, chocolate 40 cents, lump sugar 14 cents, potatoes 6½ cents a pound, and kerosene 87 cents a gallon. An enterprising American widow and her daughter, by the way, are making good butter and selling it readily at a generous profit.

But to return to the servant question. The most modest family must add a chambermaid at the same wages and allowance given the cook, and the second girl can be persuaded to wait on the table; but this would be a very small allowance. Each child of the better families has its own nurse, there is a maid whose only work is dusting, and so on—until the grand total of the retinue is very large. Servants here call their mistress "the child" behind her back—and there is a grim appropriateness in the designation; but to her face she is always "the señorita," no matter how ancient may be her days.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SOCIETY OF THE CAPITAL.

I.

A Stronghold of the Church Party.

It will have to be at once admitted that "society," that close, almost mystic circle whose claims to precedence vary with locality, but are always rigidly insisted upon, is anti-Liberal, and loyally allied to the Roman Catholic Church. This is so because women dominate in strictly social affairs, and the Church keeps its hold on them here as it does in all Catholic countries; and true also because "society," which always boasts a past whether it has one or not, runs back to a period when Romanism was the chief power in Mexico.

The "best circles"—you know the sounding phrases used to denote that sort of thing everywhere—are apparently mainly composed of those who lay claim to the titles of nobility that existed before the triumph of independence, now fallen into disuse, the people who would have been counts, marquises, and so on, had the old order of things retained its hold on Mexico; the Church notables, and persons of wealth and ancient lineage allied to Spain, whose money is not traceable to profitable investments in Church property at the time of the liberal sequestration.

It was this element in the population of Mexico that welcomed Maximilian and his plans for a brilliant court with ardor, and indeed were responsible for his coming.

It is easy to see how they argued and plotted and fought. Their plans were captivatingly plausible, with the United States divided in a death-grapple for national life, and the downfall of the great Northern republic predicted on every hand—it seemed possible, aye and probable, that the United States would be split in twain. With the failure of the greatest experiment in free government that the world had seen, why might not Mexico, long in travail, be imperially governed with profit to the people and glory to the old *noblesse*, and take her place with some show of credit among the nations of the earth, sure of sympathy from, and close alliance with, the great powers of Europe?

This was no fool's enterprise in its inception, save as it left unrecognized that mysterious spirit of liberty that has had more grotesque manifestations here than in any other spot on the globe. A people unfitted even now to properly exercise the intelligent functions of a free government, have yet been always blindly reaching out for them. Here is a singular yet impressive manifestation of the universal law of evolution.

II.

Its Natural History and Prejudices.

"Society" is not progressive here; it rarely is, in the best sense, anywhere. It staked its all on the coming of Maximilian, and lost. It witnessed his downfall with despair, drew its sympathies and associations within the shell of its own conceit, and followed the Roman Catholic Church into unavailing and sullen disapproval of the new order of things. Only now has it begun to accept the rude inevitable of liberalism in the person of the president of this republic that has come to stay. Don Sebastian Lerdo, the president whom Diaz brushed aside with scant civility, was allied to the old order of things, and select circles opened to him considerably; but an inexorable taboo has greeted chief magistrates since his day.

The old social leaders of Mexico have sat amid the ashes of their discontent longer than the "chivalry" of the South, and are more implacable to-day than the vanished slave-holding aristocracy, less reconciled to the new order of things and less willing to accept the solemn must-be of progress. It is from this class, priests and citizens, that the undercurrent of opposition to railroads find its chief stimulus. The schemes of Diaz and his government for popular education and the introduction of Northern capital and ways meet from many of the aristocracy the same discountenancing arguments that used to be advanced by the slave-holding autocrats of the United States. They exhibit similar fear of free competition and an untrammelled race in which low and high must be admitted as equals.

Society displays an undisguised and often galling contempt for the Liberal powers that be, the men at the front who have come up out of the ranks of common life, emerging through revolutions and much bloodshed. This is particularly true of those rich absentee landlords, who look on Mexico with refined disfavor from the distance of Paris or Madrid.

The Liberals have political power to their hearts' content, but when they aspire to social recognition they must enter by a straight gate and may not climb up some other way. Gonzales, whose personal tastes were far from fine, was satisfied with the opportunities opened by his official position, and dwelt in them with seeming content. Not so with Diaz, but even the president of the republic can command social standing only by a marital alliance with the family of a leader of the Church party, a Lerdist, and then he must rise by curiously imposed stages of acceptance. Diaz is not quite in society yet, it appears, though he is in a fair way to be.

One is impressed by this man here as in the other stages of his career. He has been playing a large game, he handles his cards with immense foresight, and is animated with an iron determination to win. Ambition and patriotism were curiously blended in his composition. The army and the government succumbed to his advance, and the stronghold of an aristocracy that is intrenched in breastworks of tenacious if petty prejudices yields to his new methods of attack. And society does well to accept Diaz, the man on horseback, the best and most capable friend, take him all in all, that Mexico can now count on. He has forced conservatism and blood, yes, and religious opposition, to at least a partial capitulation.

III.

Society at the Opera.

As has been intimated, the cafés and the theatre occupy a large place in the life of this capital. With a Latin population the Anglo-Saxon phases of home-visiting and entertaining are, of course, not reproduced, but family feeling is very strongly manifested. But we will approach our study of society from the outside, and by slow advances.

The opera is an advantageous point to start from. There society is on parade. Yet the despotism of the senses first brings to the attention two commonplace facts—that we must occupy straight-backed chairs, and that fleas attend the opera. The men, who sit with their hats on until the curtain rises, are divided between dress and Prince Albert coats. The two balconies are devoted to boxes, and these also border each side of the floor of the house. The truly brilliant array of ladies are in full dress, and they are fairly dazzling with Southern charms and that elation that resides in the " best bib and tucker."

As the drop rises all pay appreciative attention to the Italian opera; but it is at once apparent that the stranger without opera-glasses is but half-equipped for the evening. The universal interest does not rivet itself on the singers. This is a charming beauty show, and it is expected that the men will display their frank appreciation of it. To eye those caged señoritas for five minutes on a stretch is to pay a well-merited compliment, one that is openly appreciated and even expected. It is all as natural and genuine and pleasing as yielding to that impulse of delight which fills one at a display of flowers—for here are the rarest of exotics, the ardent blooming of the highest form of life. Between the acts the men behave as they do the world over—break for the lobby, and smoke and eat cloves; but there are local variations. Those fortunate enough to have favored feminine acquaintances in the house buy dulce—sweetmeats—which they despatch to the boxes. There seems to be a limit placed now on the national habit of smoking, for it has been abolished from its last stronghold, the pit. When the male audience files back the men stand and level their glasses at the boxes. In this way the prize of beauty is awarded, and joy or heart-burning is thereby created. Happily the average of fascination is so high that few are omitted in this informal award. The girls are keenly alive to the situation, and individual flowers in the bouquet of a box nod to each other as this, that, and the other man pay it attention.

IV.

Social Decadence and Growth.

The decaying old social leaders, by the way, do not fully appreciate how great are the inroads made by the progressionists, as the Liberals are most often called. The court language was French, and that tongue is an almost universal possession in good families, but young Mexico is learning with pride to speak English as it takes up American ways and Northern ambitions.

Like some aristocratic streets in New England cities, where "old families" brooded in select seclusion and mutually agreeable pride, society must experience a disagreeable resentment as it wakes up to the fact that the tide of affairs has left the once powerful stranded. Here, as there, a new life has established its leadership, and there must be compromise, a readjustment of old lines, or an unhappy and too-evident decadence will have to be endured. More Mexican officials than is generally known have married American wives, Washington or Baltimore women, bright and capable helpmates.

V.

Sunday Morning on the Alameda.

But now let us see society in another public aspect, as it appears in the Sunday morning promenade on the Alameda, or Boston Common of the city. Three bands discourse delightful music from ten to twelve o'clock. These organizations never appear with less than forty members, who dispense with the harsher instruments. They play standard music, such as would delight Theodore Thomas. Some of this music is native, and apparently unwritten. They never offend with the light, passing operas, and they execute the most difficult scores with the native fidelity of apprehension that marks the true musician. The programme opens with a march, and "the best people" are not expected before eleven o'clock, when they come on foot, the supposition being that they have just been released from church.

The decorum of the promenade is absolute, for the high-breeding of Spain has ordained the laws of social usages. Nought of the boisterous freedom of American city life mars the polite repose of the occasion. The señoritas walk with their brothers, their mothers, and fathers, and not with "a fellow." He is shorn of his confidence—one had almost said of his impudence—and is merely an envious and deferential spectactor. The gilded youth of the town line the mall like lizards in the sun, each with his black hat, frock-coat, tall collar, bright cravat, and tight, patent-leather shoes, as discontented as the urchin who only gets his chin over the high wall of a peach-orchard. The beauties stand the test of this clear morning light marvellously well, and appear to the best advantage in black dresses and mantilla that falls from the raven head over the shoulders and meets under the chin to frame bewitching faces. The young men may look to their hearts' content, and there is abundant flirting with the eyes, but that is all; the señorita would never think of giving a backward glance, and whistling or aheming is recognized for the rude offence that it always should be. At high noon the people betake themselves to breakfast, and so society disappears from the public gaze until five o'clock.

VI.

A Solemn and Stately Airing on the Grand Paseo.

This brings us to what is a unique daily performance, the congregation of the wealth and fashion of the city on the Paseo de la Reforma, the grand avenue of the capital. A carriage is obviously one of the necessities of social standing, and a requisite that is said to beget much economizing in families of moderate means. Such will scrimp in all directions save this, down to the very necessities of life. But outsiders can charter a hack, and that will do just as well for a passing share in this panorama. According to the popular agreement we are out for a drive, and yet from force of association one quickly fancies himself part of some great funeral procession, and the spirits instinctively fall to a solemnity befitting such an occasion. The carriages are reined into a long line, and move along one side of the avenue and then back on the other side, the centre of the drive being reserved for equestrians. Bergh never would find cause to interfere here, unless he should think that the members of the jockey club on horseback cantered too briskly. Down and back for an hour roll the carriages at slow pace, most of them being closed, to show that the occupants are out for an airing.

One can see little and enjoy not much beyond the consciousness that this is "the proper thing." The young men cut in now and then next a carriage which carries lovely freight, and why not we? That is a little better, but not much. An occasional tricycle is met, adding an incongruity to an old custom that two or three bicycles enhance. Now and then, too, a brisk horseman, flashing in the pleasing native dress, gallops past with a free and rakish life that puts ridicule on the carriage procession; but if one would see horsemanship, and particularly if he can ride himself, let him come out here for an hour before the morning roll and coffee. No such riding can be seen in any American city, and this horsemanship is only equalled on the plains.

But as the sun sinks behind the historic hill and castle of Chapultepec, and the night of the tropics falls quick like the drop of a purple curtain, the lamps on all these carriages are lighted, the horses' heads are turned towards the Plaza Mayor, and society goes home at a brisk pace, for all the world like hacks after a funeral.

The ludicrous relief from sadness of such a departure prompts one to wild and mocking laughter, but if society ever saw any humor in its stately and chilling daily parade, the fact that this funereal affair long since became hardened into an imperative habit kills all outward expression of fun. There are none so brave as to ask why, or so irreverent as to advocate any deviation from the deadly dull routine.

CHAPTER XVII.

GLIMPSES OF SOCIETY AT HOME.

I.

Its Continental Customs.

Let us follow the society of this capital, already reviewed in some of its public aspects, into the home life of its members, and photograph things that make this Spanish-American civilization distinctive. "In so far as they perpetuate the flavor of Castilian days, these people are thoroughbreds," says my friend whose knowledge of old Spain and Spain in the New World is both thorough and friendly.

The foreign ceremoniousness of social life is restful by contrast with Northern lacks in the direction of finish and well-bred repression; and a carefully-shaken mixture of the two civilizations would produce about the right thing. People here do not bolt life as Americans would lunch at a railroad station; they slowly masticate, digest, and enjoy it according to rational methods that come from their Old World inheritances, and are assisted by the leisurely influences of the climate, which is an ameliorating factor even when brought to bear on the most nervously vivacious subjects.

In discussing the usages of society as represented in the capital we shall cover the domestic life of perhaps one sixth of the population of Mexico. The home spirit is very strong, being cultivated and exalted, possibly at the expense of adventurous qualities in the average young man; but a rational enjoyment is certainly imposed by the restrictions that are placed over the youth.

The girls are educated in the excellent Catholic schools, one of them to which my attention was particularly called being presided over by an intelligent, refined, and deeply conscientious woman from New York. The pupils wear a simple uniform that did not commend itself to an American miss who had been wonted to the rivalry of dress that so early makes your schoolgirls foolishly old; but there is everything to be said in favor of the plain dress that is required in similar schools on the Continent.

Why should children be tricked out like dolls, and misses at school or "college" be permitted to masquerade as women of fashion? To be sure it is a part of the American habit of exhausting with all possible speed the good things of this world—but surely this is a wise, a foreknowing, and seasoned philosophy, that makes the pleasant flavor of life last long, bidding each stage of development follow the other in its due time by slow and orderly advancement such as Nature ordains in her supreme domain; constant progress, but no hurry, no satiety—not the quick, fiery gulp of the Western drinker, but the compassing of our delicious mint-julep through a straw—lengthening the draught, distributing its qualities over the tasting surface, and giving the palate time to take leisurely and fully appreciative cognizance of the passing event. By comparison American child-life is crude, raw, and savage yet—more barbaric than civilized in this want of sensible oversight.

II.

The Señoritas and their Charms.

Not to linger unprofitably with society in embryo, let us advance to the full-fledged señoritas, a subject of the most fascinating nature, which, unfortunately, must be mainly studied by proxy.

Certain newspapers of the United States have a habit of projecting their local environment to the uttermost parts of the earth and arguing from the known to the unknown with a confidence that angels might envy. No eminent citizen of the United States crosses the border and tarries for a day or two in this city that is vastly more imperial than they have yet appreciated, but some witling straightway paragraphs him as flirting with a bewitching señorita under the cypress-trees that arched the pathway of the last of the Montezumas. The fancy is delightfully radiant with Southern color, but the reality, on the other hand, is cold and distant as a Christmas sky in New England. This idea of the average American in freshness is as the waters of our sizable lakes beside the saline properties of Tezcoco.

As the genuine Spanish courtship practised in Mexico is a matter requiring at least six months of industrious diplomacy to bring about an engagement of the most approved form, my remarks on this delicate and interesting subject must needs be vicariously obtained. True, as Hosea Biglow says,

> "Caleb hain't no monopoly to court the seenoreetas,"

but if Caleb be a resident, his monopoly is one that the passing tourist cannot successfully attempt to break.

The señoritas are charming to look upon, and filled with abounding health, for this high air seems most gracious to women, and their eyes are very full of passionate eloquence. One further learns that these Mexican girls of the best type are intellectually remarkable, especially apt at acquiring language, proficient musicians, skilled in embroidery and the present popular surface accomplishments in art, and often keeping abreast of their brothers in that broad yet impracticable theorizing that is a national characteristic. In culture they will compare with the choicest New England product, though their background may not have brought forth so despotic an article of conscience. Still they are inflexible sticklers in all the forms of the Church, and therein do not differ from their sisters in the same walks of life at the North, the variance being solely that of the creed by which the feminine soul is surrounded.

Women of the South mature early, and when a learned old lawyer talks of the rare intellectual companionship which he enjoys with his daughter of sixteen years, the confirmed bachelor of the party is attentive and decorously silent, but quite too obviously sceptical. But this paternal judgment is afterwards confirmed by a sensible and disinterested feminine advocate, who asserts some of the generalizations embodied above. When women grow enthusiastic over women one is very safe in believing in the possession of unusual qualities, on the one side or the other.

III.

The Castilian Courtship.

To one fresh from the happy-go-lucky and rough-and-ready features that so considerably characterize American social life, the customs of Spain—ordained when woman's one undisputed aim in life was to marry—make a rare study in the antique.

We have in this country of remarkable contrasts the extremes of action in regard to women. The Indians, on the one hand, welcome her to rather more than a just share of rights in opportunities to labor, and entertain for her a rude comradeship that has never admitted the idea of a pedestal for her especial occupation. This rough equality among the Aztecs is not without its essential chivalry, though the surface outlook is depressing with a dull monotony of coarse relation, lacking in the finer graces that come with a rise in the scale of living.

The other extreme of society accepts her as the rare flower of life, to be guarded with every hothouse precaution. Her domain is the home, and the youth who would transplant the maiden of his choice from that tender care must abundantly prove his fitness for such a charge. Marriage is weighed here in all its seriousness—from the feminine side. He will have to woo with publicity and patience, for his intentions are treated from the start as a family matter.

Being smitten with the charms of the supposed one and only woman for him, he is permitted to communicate to her the wish to pay his addresses. If agreeable, she refers him to "mamma," and then the campaign may be opened. The first move is to "play the bear"—that is, the lover begins at a certain hour each day to pace the sidewalk in front of the casa where the fair one lives, gazing with his heart in his eyes at the window, behind which the maiden sits surrounded by her mother, sisters, cousins, and aunts. Under such a battery of critical eyes he marches back and forth, day after day—"to show his paces," as the horse reporter would have it. He may pass notes into this family party, if so be his courage is sufficient, but all love passages are sternly reviewed by the maternal eye; and the señorita in return can write to him—mother first editing the copy.

Etiquette does not appear to prescribe the length of time that love must continue on this parade, but after due probation the father does his duty. The matter now enters on a very practical stage, for the head of the house makes searching inquiry into the material prospects of the suitor, his property, his salary and chances in business, and above all his personal character, surroundings, and habits. If these be not satisfactory the wooing is brought to an abrupt conclusion. Otherwise the daily parade goes on until the suitor is permitted to talk with his inamorata between the bars of the low balcony; then he begs the privilege of calling, and "sees his girl," always in the presence of the family or some discreet member thereof.

Here appears the essential lack of the courtship that proceeds on the supposition that all women are angels, for the suitor is bound hand and foot before he is given a real opportunity to study the character of one whom he seeks as a partner for life.

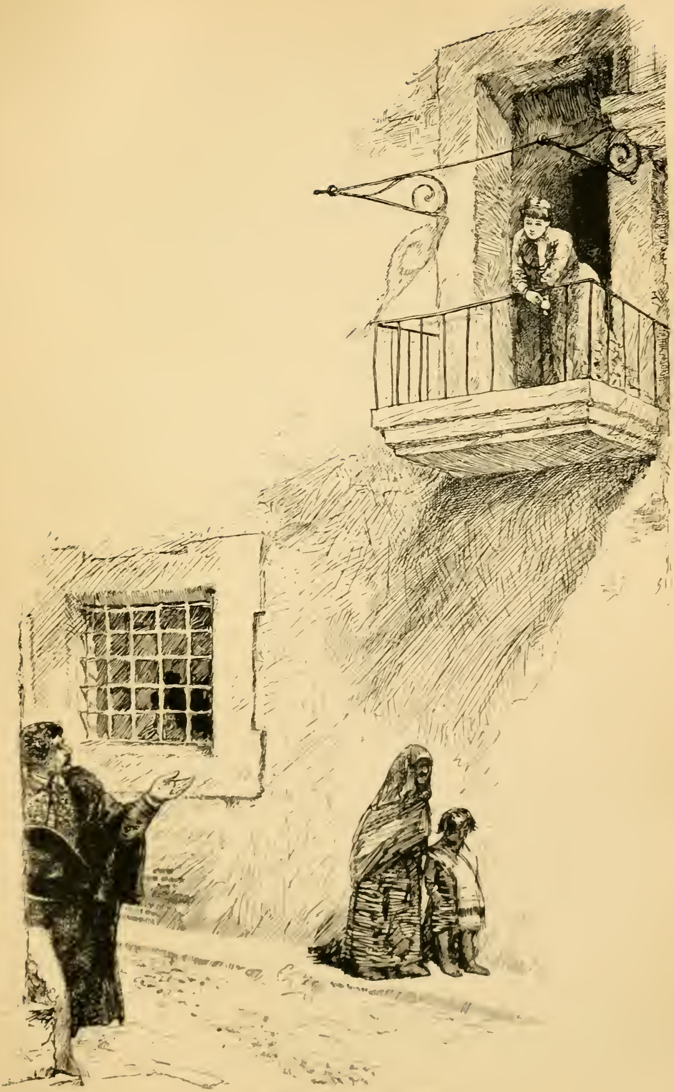
IV.

Marriage and after.

The dark-eyed beauties of Spain are duplicated in a striking way here in both the blonde and brunette types. You see the light hair and complexion of the Goths, the liquid eyes of the Moor, and the Roman nose, or the dark hair and tinge, of the Iberians; the same modifications of races that bloom in "the old country." The Indian women are often nobly planned and in the highest degree statuesque, the delight of painters.

The young girls of the higher circles are retiring until after marriage, which gives them the freedom of Continental usage, that of smoking cigarettes before company included. In calling on a Mexican family the visitor will not find the señoritas talkative, with the exception of those who have been abroad, and all of them stand aloof from male callers. But all this does not make them the less interesting, and the enchantment of distance is not the smallest of their attractions, at least to American eyes. We have a weakness for taking gambling chances. They are very clever and apprehensive, these señoritas, having a keen sense of fun and a dash of frank jealousy where the young men are concerned.

Only the civil marriage is legal under this Liberal govern-



A MEXICAN COURTSHIP.

ment, but society insists upon the ecclesiastical ceremony as well, and not infrequently this follows some little time after the civil formalities have been attended to, but the groom does not get his bride until the Church shall have sanctioned the union. These church weddings are elaborate and expensive affairs, and in the country a band of music often accompanies the many carriages in which both parties are attended by troops of friends.

A singular custom in this city seems to require the high contracting parties to go from the church to the photographer, who "takes" the pair and makes an exorbitant charge in honor of so happy an event. In general, by the way, it may be stated that the heaviest special expenses of life attend on births, marriages, and deaths—after a schedule of charges fixed by iron custom, and which it will not be necessary to fully explain in detail; but the large tax placed on entering life and leaving it by the doctors and undertakers must be part of the abominable system prevailing in Mexico which levies on all goods going and coming. But let us pick up our dropped thread. By visiting the leading photographic galleries one can see the brides back for a dozen years, and the Mexican who has been absent from the country might thus "book up" on the social history of his set, and no questions asked.

The husband literally marries his wife's family, going to her house, where he comes under the wing of the old folks. Presents are given at weddings, but the young people do not have a subsequent house-warming, and would seem to be thereafter socially dependent on the mother-in-law.

V.

Society and the People.

In considering society it must be said that Mexico, like the other nations of the earth, suffers much from her unemployed rich—the absentee landlords, who are Mexican for revenue only, and the gilded youth, just now afflicted with Anglomania, who have time and means to be foolish up to the top of their violent bent in that direction. It is difficult to eradicate from this portion of society the idea impressed by centuries of Spanish domination, that this is a country to be milked, and not a trust to be developed. The spectacle of idle capital, of an obstructive Bourbonism, of money drained to feed the pleasures of those who accept none of the responsibilities of their surroundings, is very depressing. There is so much to be done here that one is impatient for a universal recognition of the serious problems that wait for slow solution at the best, and are great and pressing enough to command the sympathetic attention of those who are in a position to be concerned about them. Of course all these conditions are not peculiar to Mexico, but they seem very startling here. And one needs no gift of prophecy to see that help is coming from another quarter.

Thus much for "society," and the condition of the people of wealth and those who have inherited the blood of the conquerors. What of the Aztecs? We have looked in on the homes of the poor, with their appalling limitations, when viewed in comparison with American homes and Northern standards of comfort. Let us see whether any horizon of hope stretches away from a Mexican home of the middle class. Such as there is lies along the pathway that the children follow to school. The attention which this Liberal government gives to the promotion of education is wise building for the present and future. The 10,000 public schools, the industrial schools, the national schools of agriculture, medicine, law, and engineering—these show that the authorities are doing perhaps the best that can be done to educate the people.

The father may be a clerk in the government palace, but his family live in one or, at the most, two rooms located in the old, unhealthy quarter of this venerable city. These contracted surroundings are scrupulously clean and scrubbed like an old-fashioned New England kitchen, but lifelong familiarity has deadened all sense of the danger that lurks beneath the household in the unflushed sewers, and grimly mocks the pale and always busy women. The son will do better by his family than this. He will have a better and more ample home in the newer section of the city. There is genuine democracy enough here to make his sure advance easily possible to the energetic climber.

Encompassed by an aristocracy that tolerates them, Diaz and his associates wait on the growth of a popular support which shall be animated by substantial loyalty, growing out of benefits conferred by a broad and settled public policy which has regard for all classes. Present lust of power does not blot out a large patriotism in all this. One of the most brilliant and successful young lawyers of the city came here from the country, a friendless Aztec boy, and has made his way to the front. Such cases are common, and they are bound to be increasingly multiplied. There is nothing constant but change, here as everywhere, and the change is to be a levelling up, the advance of the Indian in public life and in social recognition. He already, in some of the states, occupies the post of governor, and is the large part of the nation in numbers. The traditional superiority of the Spanish heirs to bloody inheritance is fading faster than those who are a part of this national life apprehend at present; and the Aztec will have his own again as fast as he deserves to receive it. This liberal government must in time be essentially a government by the people.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEXICO'S RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK.

I.

The Ancient Union of Church and State.

In order to appreciate the magnitude of the religious revolution which awes the student of Mexican history, one must remember that Spain and the Church were one. The hand of Rome was in the iron glove of Cortez, for the standard which the Spanish adventurer set up bore the motto in Latin: "Let us follow the Cross, and in that sign we shall conquer;" and so it was. Mexico was overrun in the name of Spain and Rome, and she was governed for three centuries for the profit of both with relentless selfishness that has left its deep and wide impress on the material and religious life of this nation, to the infinite injury of both. Church and State were apparently indissolubly and profitably united for plunder, with a very incidental regard for the interests of the Indians. What the Conquest achieved the missionaries of the Spanish Catholic Church held fast. The religion of the cross was enforced by arms, and the walls of the new faith were cemented with the blood of those slain under its banner. The creed of force and not of love won these new triumphs for the Church.

The most careful students of this civilization seem to agree that there was nothing radical in the transformation which gave the Aztecs pictures of the Madonna and the saints in place of their idols and heathen forms. It was, in the main, a change of externals in which the shadow supplied the place of the substance. With scarcely an exception the priests endorsed and inspired the cruelties by which the power of the Spaniards was extended over the native races of America. The story of the brutalities of fire, of torture, of bloodhounds, and of the pitiless sword, by which the tribes were conquered, marked the advent of the gospel of peace. The old Spanish writers record all this with satisfaction, as fitting work done for the glory of the Church.

In all this dark chapter of history one man stands out as a lonely apostle of mercy. It was fitting that the greatest modern Aztec painter should embalm the fragrant memory of the good friar, Las Casas, the one prominent representative of the faith who unceasingly urged a policy of clemency upon the Spanish rulers. His record of the atrocities he was powerless to stay forms the black inside chapter that tells of the Gospel as first expounded in Mexico. "With mine own eyes," he writes, "I saw kingdoms as full of people as hives are of bees, and now where are they? . . . Almost all have perished. The innocent blood which they had shed cried out for vengeance; the sighs, the tears of so many victims went up to God." The never-ending stream of blood that poured from the sacrificial stone before Huitzilopochtli was not stayed by these Christian hands. It was removed from before the god of stone and continued to flow for the glory of the only true God. The conception of the Supreme Being in Mexico and in Spain was not so very different, and the transition from the one form of worship to the other was not unduly violent, it will be seen.

With the words of Las Casas sounding in his ears, one approaches the portraits in the national museum with peculiar feelings. Here are the men who did these deeds—

from Cortez down through the some fifty Spanish viceroys who successively governed the country, with occasional bishops or archbishops among them. The face fullest, on the whole, of intellectual character is that of Cortez, and the picture is vouched for as the best extant. It masks rather than reveals character. The others seem like inferior men, the ready agents of more powerful wills, occasionally rising from mediocrity into a stern malevolence of purpose. The contrast between these faces and the glorified serenity and power of the countenance of the good bishop, as depicted by Felix Parra, is most impressive.

The agents who executed the will of Spain with regard to this distant possession were, as a rule, willingly obedient to the policy which wrung all the wealth it was possible to exact from an enslaved people, and shipped it to the central government. Every industry that could conflict with the sale here of Spanish goods was strangled in its infancy by any means up to the penalty of death. Never was any land more put upon than was New Spain by the "mother country"—that misnomer the most empty.

It is a satisfaction to read that some of the treasure-laden galleons that made annual voyages in fleets to Cadiz became the prizes of freebooters of the sea, whose title to what was lost to Mexico was as good as that enforced by the Spaniards. The wars of Europe now and again were heard of in the New World, as when England's Admiral Anson, in 1743, captured near Acapulco an East Indian galleon whose cargo was valued at $2,000,000. In time, too, this war stopped the exports of bullion to Spain, and threw Mexico on her own resources, so that the business of this country was developed to a degree that made apparent the possibility of independence, and awoke the causes that led to the dawn of liberty.

II.

Rise and Fall of the Inquisition.

By almost these same steps did the selfishness of the Church work its own remedy. A superstitious people had been first coerced and then diplomatically led into the fullest outward obedience to Rome. The visit of Cortez to Spain and the pope, in 1527, had been fruitful in yielding a crop of bulls of indulgence that made the leader and his soldiers assured heirs of heaven, and local saints had been raised up to satisfy the appetite of the Indians for signs and wonders. Special holy privileges were also constantly on profitable sale. In time, too, the Mexican Church welcomed the Inquisition, and indeed demanded it.

About 1529 the leading men of the province—religious, military, and civil—among them Zumarraga, the first bishop, the same bigot who burned the historical records of the Aztecs, met in council and resolved as follows:

> "It is most necessary that the Holy Office of the Inquisition shall be extended to this land, because of the commerce with strangers here carried on, and because of the many corsairs abounding on our coasts, which strangers may bring their evil customs among both natives and Castilians, who, by the grace of God, should be kept free from heresy."

Thereafter the holy office had ample headquarters and the fullest sway, and condemned to roasting heretics and sorcerers with the utmost zeal and method. One public burning-place has since been included in the Alameda, the great palace of the Inquisition is now a medical college, while in the city of Puebla the Baptist missionaries control for their gentle uses a similar establishment.

The first inquisitorial *auto-da-fé* resulted in the death of "twenty-one pestilent Lutherans," and about the last one condemned to be shot, in 1815, the patriot Morelos, companion of Hidalgo and his successor in leadership, both parish priests, who inaugurated the war of independence in 1810. For declaring against Spain the court pronounced Jose Maria Morelos "an unconfessed heretic, an abettor of heretics, and a disturber of the ecclesiastical hierarchy; a profaner of sacraments; a traitor to God, to the king, and to the pope." That was the beginning of the end for the Inquisition and the Church. From 1824 to 1867 it stood straight across the path of liberty, and spared no means to stay progress towards a distinct national life. Holding one half or two thirds of the wealth of the country, it had declined in 1846 to contribute anything to help repel the American invasion. This helped to prepare popular sentiment for what followed.

III.

The Confiscation of Church Property.

It would be difficult to overdraw the material splendor of the Church, to whose princely revenues all contributed. A tithe of everything produced in Mexico or imported hither went to the clergy. A century of toil had been expended to rear for her occupation in this city the noblest cathedral on the continent, a century and a half had gone to make an edifice only less grand in Guadalajara, and at Puebla and elsewhere were cathedrals of note—all magnificently adorned with gold and jewels and splendid things. The conventual establishments of the Franciscans and Dominicans were on the largest scale, and were most elaborately appointed. But while the Church absorbed so great a proportion of the wealth of the country, it early rendered back much of it in schools, asylums, and other public institutions. Thomas A. Janvier, who has made a study of these religious foundations, says: "Broadly speaking, the influence of the religious orders upon the colony was beneficial during its first century; neutral during its second; harmful during its third."

With such a hold upon the wealth of the country, and with its practices so deeply rooted in the life of the nation, how is it that without the introduction of any new form of faith the people of Mexico have overturned the old order of things? The revolution was a clear economic necessity, but it involved more than the laws of trade. It exhibits the superficial character of the hold possessed by the Church on this population. When ecclesiasticism came in conflict with the vital spirit of liberty, the weaker went to the wall; freedom and absolutism were incompatible. The practical enslavement of the native population had been accomplished by Spain and the Church, and both logically fell. When the people were groping towards freedom this sequence was little appreciated; the first guarantees of Mexican independence were "Religion, Union, and Liberty."

Juarez was the apostle of liberty in its broad sense. He drew up the laws of reform proclaimed in 1857 by Comonfort, and he executed them in 1867 upon the downfall of the empire. This was the most radical transformation undertaken by any government of modern times. It confiscated property estimated at $300,000,000, and devoted it to the purposes of the government of independence. The Church was stripped at a blow of all its possessions, its convents and religious houses were closed, its religious societies were abolished, and to-day the Church exists in Mexico only by the sufferance of the government. The clergy were forbidden to wear the garb of their order, religious parades and processions were prohibited, and the civil marriage was declared to be the only legal one. The retribution which overtook the Church was terrible, however much it had been provoked, and it was carried out with a sternness which was vindictive in its sweeping character. The harvest which came out of the dead past was abundant after its kind.

When the Church favored a foreign mission and supported Maximilian it tried the long-suffering people beyond endurance, and their joy in the humiliation of a great religious system was savage in its final manifestions. Nothing is more impressive in the study of Mexico than the fantastical fanaticism of liberty which has wrought such great and often seemingly untoward results, but which all, as seen in review, fit into a remarkable scheme of progress. No human intelligence foresaw the end from the beginning—unless Juarez be made the possible exception.

IV.

Results of the Sequestration.

It was inevitable that a revolution so sweeping in its extent and so blind in its details should have profited the government very little. These hundreds of millions of dollars which nominally accrued to the government have not sufficed to keep the present administration from a condition of things nearly approaching to bankruptcy. Stunned and indignant at the character and extent of the retribution which had fallen upon them, the authorities of the Church forbade good Catholics, under penalty of excommunication, from investing in "God's property." It was deemed possible to prevent the Liberal government from realizing on its seizures. This was an obvious error of policy from the standpoint of expediency. Faithful sons of Rome kept their hands off the rich holdings, for the Church, composed of some 7000 ecclesiastics, owned literally the best property of the republic in both city and country. These comprised, it has been stated, about 900 rural estates and some 25,000 blocks of city property. Had friends of the Church been permitted, or rather covertly directed, to buy in all this, the Church might have gained her own in an underhand way. But, in fact, the prohibition was so far effectual that what the Church had owned passed into the hands of those who had small regard for her favor. The adventurous and heretical elements of society profited by the sale at the expense of both Church and government. Many of the wealthy men of Mexico made their fortunes at this time, and their sons have in a measure outlived the odium attached to such an investment.

It is very plain that clerical politicians now realize their mistake, and some of the property formerly owned by the Church is controlled by those who have acted in her interest and are virtually her trustees. But no such arrangement is legal, and, so far as the public is informed, the Church has regained nothing of her lost possessions. The some 4000 churches and cathedrals in which Catholic worship is permitted are held only by the courtesy of the government, the property being at any time liable to be denounced and sold.

V.

The Church Power To-day.

But the power of the Church, while thus seemingly broken, is by no means at an end. With more sweep of vision and a more enlightened moral purpose her misfortune might have been converted into an element of strength; but, weighted with such a past, she failed to recognize her opportunity and to use it. She had no toleration for the new while she has idly mourned over the downfall of the old. Perhaps she has gained moral strength from such pitiless persecution, but this supposition does not appear to be borne out in any large way by the known facts. With the downfall of her temporal power fell most of the scandals attaching to those who served the interests of the Church, but the evidences of any widespread elevation of purpose must be inferential. The Church has yet failed to readjust her lines to the existing conditions. The relations between the clergy and the Liberal government naturally continue to be of a strained character. Each regards the other with apprehension and dislike, and the most deep-seated opposition to the existing condition of affairs exists among the priest-led Church party. To its representatives the friends of the government have offered no quarter, and with them they have sought no alliances. Perhaps the time has come when a more conciliatory spirit may be safely exercised. Such appears to be the tendency of President Diaz's policy, in that the head of his cabinet is an influential politician whose sympathies have been with the Church party. If the Church, which retains its hold upon the women of the country, is ready to bury the past, it can make for itself a useful future within legitimate channels. This, indeed, is its only hope. There are in its ranks those who recognize the rightfulness of a division of the powers of Church and State. These prelate reformers have gone so far as to officially advise the observance of the civil laws in regard to marriages and other points wherein the Church holds that its province has been invaded. Such would recognize the fact of established peaceful popular government, and recommend that the Church accept the inevitable and find new work apart from further participation in civil affairs.

This is the hopeful spot in the outlook between the ecclesiastical and civil powers. But such liberality is sporadic rather than prevalent, and must be so in the nature of things. The Roman Catholic Church of Mexico is vastly different from the Church as you know it when modified by the atmosphere of free and intelligent America. The body of its priesthood are greatly inferior to yours, largely made up of men whose learning is theological, whose views are implacably narrowed by sect, and whose sympathies are intensely provincial. God dwells in Rome, and the devil takes all the rest of creation not bound thereto. Convictions like these being understood, and injected by the men who aggressively hold them, often of mixed blood, among a population whose ancestors slew the supposed enemies of cherished stone images, and one can see why Protestantism early had its martyrs on this soil.

VI.

The Opening for Missionary Work.

Religious prejudices are slow to decay, but they are surely fading out here in a remarkable way. Time, education, railroads, business enterprise, liberty—these are the forces at work. The first fruits of some of them are materialistic rather than spiritual, and beget a cutting-away from all religious associations. So be it, for the present. All at least combine to open the field for the labor of every religious denomination, and there is need for all.

Missionary effort in Mexico must be fundamental, as it usually is everywhere. It must plant schools and exalt the influences of the home, civilize and humanize, play its large part in working out a national future that is worth having. A somewhat unhealthy sentimentalism often considerably obscures the high quality of statesmanship that enters into missionary work, and young men miss an inspiration that they ought to get from this point of view.

I met a most intelligent, frank, attractive man during two days of a railroad ride, whose knowledge of this country and its people was accurate and suggestive. He was sympathetic, charitable, broad, and wholly free from cant. Casually I learned that he was an American missionary. Full of human interest, sensible, practical, and a worker, he is exerting an influence here that will tell in a large way. He had no word of the hardships, the isolation, the infinite annoyances that some might find, and which most travellers do report as they flit; but had taken a grip on the whole situation, past, present, and to come, and was doing a man's work like a man. Think of the opportunity that confronts such a one and compare it with the pastorate of a fashionable city church in the United States! New England never exalted the ministerial office beyond what it may become in the hands of one who will fill up the measure of its legitimate possibilities here, but the man who tries to do this must be full-grown and come to stay. The life work of Dr. Simeon Calhoun, the Cedar of Lebanon, was done in Syria, and it matured late; but it was grandly worth doing. And yet he early cherished the vague ambition that he would like to be a lawyer and perhaps a congressman!

VII.

A Review of Protestant Labors.

The pioneer Protestant work done in Mexico was undertaken by the American Bible and Tract societies, who sent colporteurs in the wake of the American army—a mingling of the sword and the cross that seems almost as incongruous in the retrospect as do the performances of Cortez and his attendant priests. But the first settled missionary work was undertaken by the Baptists in 1863. About 1872 the Presbyterians, Methodists (North and South), and Congregationalists began vigorous operations, and all are actively in the field, working with a substantial harmony of effort that has produced remarkable results.

What these are will be best shown by some comparative statements which I draw from statistics furnished by Rev. Dr. Butler. The largest share of this work is being done by the Methodist Church. Eight years ago there were 130 Protestant congregations; now there are 264. Then 12 church edifices were occupied, and now there are 45. The value of this church property was then estimated at $139,000, and now the sum of such property is placed at $412,850. Eight years ago 100 places of worship aside from the church edifices were reported, and now they number 219. In 1877 there were 28 day-schools, three orphanages, and two theological seminaries; now there are 82 day-schools with 3086 scholars, 130 Sunday-schools with 4650 pupils, and five theological seminaries with 36 students. Thus this field of Protestant effort is producing its own workers, who will not be new to its conditions. Against 125 agents employed in 1877, there are now 291, or more than double that force—69 foreign missionaries and their wives, 40 ordained native ministers, 163 unordained native helpers, and 19 women sent by the women's societies. What are the results produced by this array of workers? The communicants are placed at 13,096, and the probable adherents of Protestantism at 27,300. This is but the infancy of the work. There are 11 presses employed, and these issue 13 periodicals whose united circulation is put at 11,400—which illustrates the fact that this is not a reading population; but nearly 4,000,000 pages of religious literature are annually published.

It will be seen from the above that in eight years the hold of Protestantism has been more than doubled. The worst is past, so far as persecution is concerned, but such fanaticism as comes out of the dark national background is liable to break into violence at any time. Still each year gives greater scope to the liberalizing forces that make for domestic peace and national development. The government welcomes any rival to its old antagonist, the Roman Catholic Church. The temper of those in authority is illustrated in an incident related by Mr. Strother in one of his reports. A Protestant clergyman, who applied to the governor of an important state for a guard to protect his church against a threatened mob, received this reply:

> "I willingly give you the desired protection, as it is my duty to see that the laws are respected; and while I feel no interest whatever in your religious forms or opinions, we are all interested in encouraging the organization of a body of clergy strong enough to keep the old Church in check."

There is true bravery in the missionary spirit as exhibited in Mexico. Thus writes Rev. John W. Butler, the head of the Methodist forces here:

> "We well remember, soon after we came into this country, that an English gentleman called upon our superintendent to protest against his sending one of our missionaries to the city of Guanajuato. He tried to make us believe it would cost his life and the life of his family. Dr. Butler quietly replied that our missionaries knew in whom they had believed, and were willing to trust their lives in His hands. In a few days both superintendent and missionary, accompanied by their wives, started for Guanajuato. At times it looked as though it might cost some lives before the work was established; but God was with his faithful missionaries, and to-day we have between three and four hundred adherents in the very city of Guanajuato, besides all those who have died in the faith and those who have removed to other places. Some of these latter have been the means of establishing other congregations in different parts of the state, so that we feel sure that upward of one thousand souls have been led "from darkness to light," as the result of seven years of missionary work in that one state!"

VIII.

The Martyr Stephens.

The story of the first American missionary martyr is sad enough. Rev. J. L. Stephens was graduated from the Pacific Theological Seminary in 1872, and with his classmate, Rev. David F. Watkins, came, under Congregational auspices, from San Francisco to the city of Guadalajara in the fall of that year. At first the Romanist opposition was so bitter that Mr. and Mrs. Watkins were stoned in the streets, but the governor of the state and the commander of the Mexican forces located there countenanced the mission work, and in August of the following year things had so far adjusted themselves that the Protestants were well treated. Then, in November, Mr. Stephens moved to Ahualuco, a town of five thousand inhabitants, ninety miles away. His success was so great as to stir the animosity of the cura, who, March 1, preached an exciting sermon to the Indians, in which he is quoted as saying: "It is necessary to cut down, even to the roots, the tree that bears bad fruit. You may interpret these words as you please." Of the events of the next day, thus directly incited, a Mexican newspaper reports: "At 2 A.M. on the 2d of March the house of Mr. Stephens was assaulted by a mob, crying, 'Long live the cura! death to the Protestants!' They forced the doors and entered, destroying and stealing all they found. Mr. Stephens was brutally assassinated, his head severed into several parts, and his body was much mutilated." The "tree" was cut and chopped. One of the dead man's converts was killed, others were violently assaulted, while attempts were made to poison some.

There have been native martyrs to the Protestant faith not a few, the cases of persecution were many in those earlier years, and they are occurring to-day; but in 1873 President Lerdo declared his purpose to do all he could for the protection of the missionaries and of religious liberty, and the same determination exists far more powerfully in the person of President Diaz to-day. He is better able to preserve the peace, and each year adds to the strength and the ready resources of the tolerant national government.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHAPULTEPEC AND ITS MEMORIES.

I.

The Ancient Aztec Associations.

The most interesting spot in Mexico to the tourist, whatever may be his "fad" in the matter of sight-seeing, must be the castle of Chapultepec. Attractive in itself, this spot is fuller than any other of the national history. The student of its site, the rocks, trees, and walls, might write the complete and graphic story of this people—for about this spot all the notable events and the famous men of the generations that make Mexico's history have gathered and lived. Here is a grand stage that has been the scene of exciting acts in many a play of love and death, comedy and tragedy; it has sampled passing life to illustrate all its phases at some characteristic point in the turbulent life of a nation. Truly the associations of this hill and castle are unapproached by anything to be found in the United States. Let us glance at some of them in rapid review.

About two miles southwest of the city is Chapultepec, and leading to that rocky eminence is Maximilian's grand boulevard, Paseo de la Reforma. One can drive to it thus fittingly in the state of a carriage, or steal more humbly up to the gates of the park behind the galloping mules of the horse-car line that leaves the west side of the Plaza Mayor, and passes along old streets that reveal the homes of the people in all their sturdy frankness. Better still is the compromise that goes by carriage and returns by car, allowing a long day's visit, such as will leave firm impressions on the memory, and lead to other days of profitable reconnoitre.

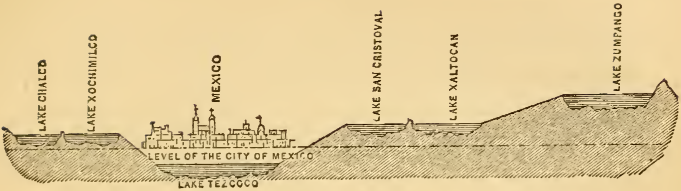
The hill is an immense, isolated, rocky protuberance that rises boldly out of the swampy soil of the valley; and from under the shadow of this great rock gushes a magnificent spring of water. These characteristics made Chapultepec a vantage-point early recognized and seized upon, and they have never permitted it to sink in importance since. Men have come and gone in the valley; but they have all coveted and distinguished Chapultepec until it is clothed with legend and romance as with creepers, giant trees, mosses, and all the multiplied devices of tropical nature.

Here one can con history that runs back about six hundred and fifty years, for we are told that the Aztecs made their appearance in 1245 at this "Hill of the Grasshopper," then surrounded by a marsh. Eighty years after they founded their famous city of Tenochtitlan on Lake Tezcoco, halting there at the sign of an eagle perched on a prickly pear that grew out of the crevice of a rock on a little island. This legend became immortal common property when the Spaniards placed it on their money. The dollar is an epitome of the Aztec past—on the one side the rude representation of the blazing sun, the Indian deity; and on the other an eagle sitting on a cactus and eating a snake. In this solitary instance the conquerors recognized, though by an empty sign, the claims of the people who gave them wealth.

II.

Tenochtitlan and the Floating Gardens.

But more of the old city. Ditches and canals were dug to make the necessary land, and so the wonder of an adobe Venice grew with years to amaze the Spaniards and make controversy to-day over the real extent and importance of the place which the Spaniards razed at the time of the



RELATION OF THE LAKES TO THE CITY.

Conquest. It was obviously not built in any such massive fashion as the pyramids of the Toltecs, else Cortez and his less than five hundred soldiers could not have destroyed in seventeen days three fourths of the city which Prescott believed to have contained 60,000 houses and a population of 300,000. The ancient city of Mexico was no doubt filled with light structures such as the Indians rear with little pains to-day, and it may be questioned whether adobe did not figure most largely in its more pretentious buildings.

One can now see the gardens that do not float, and recall those that doubtless did, by embarking with Indian boatmen who will propel with poles their roofed and curtained scows along the canal that runs from the city, between willows and poplars, to Lake Xochimilco. At Santa Anita and elsewhere are the little patches of garden ground, separated by narrow canals, where flowers and vegetables are grown for the city markets. The spring flower festivals —when the banks of the great canal and boats manned by bare-legged, brown boatmen are buried in blossoms—constitute most brilliant and characteristic *fêtes*, which are celebrated with an irrepressible enthusiasm wholly foreign to Yankeeland. The beauty and fashion of the capital fill the carriages that line the banks of the canal, and view the simple Indians as they literally revel in roses or poppies. These oldest inhabitants sing out of overflowing joy, to the accompaniment of guitar, harp, or viol, and are royally content with the happiness of a day—but, alas, they also remain eternally careless for to-morrow!

The original floating islands, conceived in the Aztec poverty of land, were ingenious and satisfactory devices. Reeds, rushes, and bushes were bound into a raft on which was placed sediment from the lake bottom, constituting a rich soil. The sun beat on it from above, and the water was always at the roots of these ideal gardens. No one familiar with tropical growths will question that astonishing results must have been secured.

Chapultepec was always important to Tenochtitlan, whose inhabitants had connected the hill with their lake city by a causeway, and over this extended an aqueduct—on exactly the line occupied by the existing aqueduct.

III.

The Great Park and the Castle.

In visiting Chapultepec one is delighted and awed by the groves of cypress-trees that have been spared amid the otherwise complete and wanton destruction of forests throughout the valley. The entire base of the hill is encompassed by woodland that on the west broadens into a kingly park. These trees—*ahuehuetes*—are monarchs not only of all they survey, but of their kind on the continent. Their chief, "the Cypress of Montezuma," is forty-six feet in circumference, a noble fellow, full of stately cheer which he has generously shared with the noted men of each generation for years untold—receiving, no doubt, many a spontaneous confidence in return for his rare companionship. Yet this Methuselah of the forest bears his years with lusty vigor—in appearance, like his fellows, he is venerable with gracefully pendent gray mosses; but no more stricken with garrulous moods than 367 years ago, when his acquaintance was enlarged to take in the Spaniards. Very likely some poet has abused this old party by attempting to rehearse his experiences—for verse-making is a violent disease here, and this would be a "catching" phase of the obvious such as poetasters are partial to.

A broad road, bordered by the most impulsive foliage, circles this fortified hill of porphyry that is crowned by a very satisfactory palace. The height is occupied by the national military academy, the West Point of Mexico, and as the residence of the president of the republic. It is not an uncommon thing for visitors to discover President and Mrs. Diaz out for a morning stroll, and parties of horsemen and fair equestriennes are more frequently seen than carriages. On all days, but especially Sundays and feast days, this is the people's park.

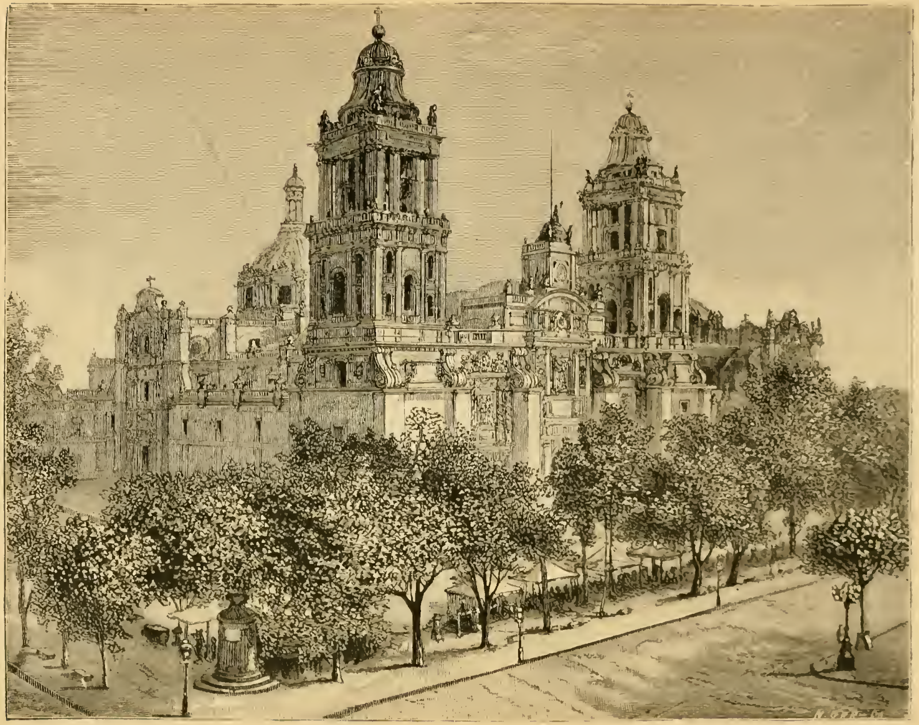
In 1783 royal permission was granted the then Spanish viceroy, whose name is of no consequence, "to repair and put in order the palace of Chapultepec"—a structure whose origin does not seem to be satisfactorily traced; but the viceroy died, leaving a son who took up his father's robes of office, extended his plans, and reconstructed the palace at an outlay of $300,000. Additions were subsequently made by about every government this troubled country has had—so that a good deal must have been done up here.

The palace is a very imposing structure, commanding the landscape two hundred feet above the valley. On reaching the height we enter the great stone buildings of the lower terrace that are devoted to the military academy, where hundreds of bright-looking lads in uniform may be seen pacing about, text-book in hand. Few of them will ever live so near a palace again, and not many of them were accustomed to luxurious surroundings at home. The government has a policy with regard to them, as it has in most things. This school is intended to be democratic, and it reaches poor boys whose advance makes not only loyal individual supporters for the Liberal party, but insures strong partisans in every family distinguished by the elevation of one of its members.

Above these buildings, on a still higher terrace, is the Mexican White House, where Maximilian sought to domesticate royalty — a marble palace, indeed, with richly decorated halls and galleries opening into rare gardens. Each terrace is a nest of flowers; and at the eastern base of the hill a winding and terraced drive leads to a larger garden with an artificial lake.

The views that stretch away below in this great basin of the Cordilleras are admitted to be comparable with nothing in America, and probably nothing like their duplicate exists in the world. We look back on the landscape made familiar from the tower of the cathedral, seeing the city in the distance with that building as its centre-piece, and the plain with encompassing mountains, the towering volcanoes and nestling lakes, all standing out with pre-Raphaelite distinctness.

"What," inquires the Princess Salm-Salm, "are Central Park in New York, Regent's Park in London, the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, the Biebcrich Park on the Rhine, the Prater in Vienna — nay, even the pride of Berlin, the Thiergarten — what are they all in comparison with this venerable and delightful spot?" That conundrum, so far as we know, declines to be seated!



THE GREAT CATHEDRAL OF MEXICO.

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IV.

Theories about Aztec Royalty.

However captivating natural scenery may be, there must enter into it human heroism and the association with personal fame, in order to make any spot permanently attractive in the largest sense. This test of human interest Chapultepec meets with a line of names that must always possess romantic attraction for the tourist.

The Aztec sovereigns undoubtedly walked beneath these hoary trees, though the authorities most learned in local antiquity do not sanction the fancies of those writers who declare that Chapultepec was occupied as "a 'summer resort' for the chiefs, or 'a royal villa.'" A. F. Bandelier positively controverts this assumption. The hill appears to have been used to some extent as a royal burial-place, however. If, then, instead of supposing with a woman writer that here "the last of the Aztec emperors wandered with his dark-eyed harem"—something that could not be, for Guatemotzin was too busy fighting the Spaniards to have any time for such foolishness—we observe in fancy the Aztecs interring dead royalty, the solemn ceremony will be in keeping with these impressive surroundings. A partially obliterated effigy of one of these old emperors, which can be found on a ledge of natural rock at the eastern base of the hill, will help to give reality to our imaginings.

V.

Lieutenant Grant and the American Invasion.

From this spot the Mexican war rises out of the misty distance into a vivid and easily followed panorama. Over there to the west, about a mile away and in full view, is the battlefield of Molino del Rey (the Mill of the King), and Ulysses

S. Grant was in the fight, September 8, 1847, a modest and trusty lieutenant, who exhibited some soldierly resources, but was by no means a star figure. He had been with "the army of occupation" under General Zachary Taylor in Texas and down to Monterey at the north; and then sailed from the Rio Grande around to Vera Cruz with General Winfield Scott's "army of invasion," which had accomplished its victorious march of two hundred and sixty miles from the coast to the suburbs of the capital city. General Grant's comments in his "Memoirs" touching this war are doubly interesting to one who has seen "the lay of the land," and can thus better appreciate that clear sense which shines through all his judgments. Though speaking in high praise of Scott's generalship, the great commander characterizes the battle of Molino del Rey and the storming of Chapultepec as unnecessary. He says:

> "In years later, if not at the time, the battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec have seemed to me to have been wholly unnecessary. When the assaults upon the garitas of San Cosme and Belen were determined upon, the road running east to the former gate could have been reached easily, without an engagement, by moving along south of the mills until west of them sufficiently far to be out of range, thence north to the road above mentioned; or, if desirable to keep the two attacking columns nearer together, the troops could have been turned east so as to come on the aqueduct road, out of range of the guns from Chapultepec. In like manner the troops designated to act against Belen could have kept east of Chapultepec, out of range, and come on to the aqueduct, also out of range of Chapultepec. Molino del Rey and Chapultepec would both have been necessarily evacuated if this course had been pursued, for they would have been turned."

The Americans retired from Molino del Rey, and not until the 13th was Chapultepec assaulted at close quarters.

Our artillery labored for a day against the devoted garrison on this hill, and then came the storming by troops under command of General Pillow. How far this assault was removed from a holiday parade will be realized only as one looks up and down the precipitous and seemingly insurmountable crags at the south of the castle, where the Americans placed their scaling-ladders, while the rest of the troops kept the attention of the Mexicans at the north side, where there is an easy slope. Thus we took Chapultepec, and captured the gallant defender of the position, General Nicholas Bravo. Soon after, the Americans effected an easy entrance into the capital of Mexico, where the politicians had been characteristically exalting their selfish interests at the expense of the nation.

VI.

The Dead Cadets, and our Captured Cannon.

This height was occupied as a military academy then, as at present, and we killed many of the brave lads enrolled as students, who fought gallantly in literal defence of their home. Now let us stroll down to the garden at the eastern base of the hill, and there we shall find a monument, reared in 1880, in memory of the courage and patriotism of the cadets of 1847—"Who fell in the North American invasion." The simple pathos of that shaft shames all visitors from the greater republic, and it is significant that Joaquin Miller, David A. Wells, and nearly every other American writing about this spot demand that the United States shall give back to Mexico the old cannon that are considered "objects of interest" on the plains at West Point, together with every Mexican banner or other trophy that may be treasured in our national museums.

"If it is peace and amity, and political influence and extended trade and markets, and a maintenance of the Monroe doctrine on the American continent that we are after," writes Mr. Wells, "such an act would do more to win the hearts and dispel the fears and suspicions of the people of Mexico, and of all the states of Central and South America, than reams of diplomatic correspondence, and endless travelling trade commissions, and formal international resolutions."

"How much are these old pot-metal cannon worth?" queries Mr. Miller. "How much would they melt down? They should be rolled down the bank into the river rather than lie there forever reminding us of an event that ought to be forgotten. Send them every one back to Mexico, where they belong. And in return for them, my word for it, you will get their weight in gold before another century rolls by. But we don't want gold. We want the good-will of Mexico."

Mr. Miller's observations are not without point.

We won from Mexico a territory of a million square miles, and out of the mines in that area we have extracted in noble metals alone, it is said, treasure amounting to $3,500,000,000—a sum equivalent to every man's weight in gold who was in our army! This is tremendous spoil, indeed, to say nothing of the other riches of Texas, California, Colorado, and the territories of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.

Perhaps we can afford such a belated and sentimental reparation—if such it can be called—as these gentlemen propose.

"For myself," declares General Grant, "I was bitterly opposed to the [annexation] measure, and to this day regard the war which resulted as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation. It was an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies, in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory."

VII.

Reminiscences of Maximilian and Carlotta.

Maximilian and Carlotta, emperor and empress of shortlived greatness, are best recalled by Chapultepec. Here was to have been the centre of their sumptuous court, and this is the royal residence which they beautified, and for which they had planned elaborate improvements. What a heterogeneous collection of shades might be called in review under the gloom of these towering cypresses, with their festoons of Spanish moss, from the Toltecs down to this Austrian archduke!

Maximilian's career in Mexico was the product of the French invasion, and of a woman's ambition for power and place. Louis Napoleon, in 1861, no doubt moved thereto by the outbreak of the American Rebellion, which made the future of this continent a matter for kings to speculate on, and finding a pretext in the suspension by Mexico of payment on her debt held in Europe, formed the famous tripartite alliance of France, England, and Spain.

After a period of forty years of internal feuds, during which Mexico had passed through thirty-six changes of government and experienced seventy-three rulers, the Liberal forces had routed the army of the Church party, and Juarez assumed the presidency. He was confronted by an impoverished country and an empty treasury, and proposed to suspend all payments on foreign loans. "This act," wrote Mr. Corwin to Secretary Seward, "may, perhaps, have been imprudent. Mexico could not pay her debts, however, and maintain her government; and perhaps it was as well to say she would not pay for two years as to promise to pay and submit herself to the mortification of constantly asking further time." Our diplomatic representative further declared, "I cannot find in this republic any men of any party better qualified, in my judgment, for the task than those in power."

The allied powers sent over a military force which took possession of Vera Cruz. England and Spain speedily compromised their interests and withdrew, but the French remained, bent on conquering the country. The Church was helping its own. The national forces fought bravely to stay the invaders, who entered the capital in triumph in June, 1863. A month later these allies of the Church party had called together a picked "assembly of notables," which body thus decreed, in one, two, three order:

> "The Mexican nation adopts for its form of government a limited, hereditary monarchy, with a Catholic prince; the sovereign shall take the title of Emperor of Mexico; the imperial crown of Mexico is offered to His Imperial Highness, Prince Ferdinand Maximilian, archduke of Austria, for him and his descendants."

Two years before, Mexicans resident in Paris had invited Maximilian to rule over the country from which they derived their revenues. He naturally asked for a more general endorsement of the flattering proposition, and the above formal call was transmitted in August, 1863, and reinforced in March, 1864, by still another Mexican deputation. The crown was accepted April 10, at the Castle of Miramar, and Napoleon III. pledged his army and money to establish Maximilian on his tropical throne. Thus came the emperor and empress, with the blessing of the pope newly laid on their heads.

VIII.

The Quick Ending of a Dream of Power.

The youthful sovereigns—he thirty-two and she twenty-four—were welcomed with honors at Vera Cruz, May 28, and their progress to the capital was heralded by popular demonstrations. The outlook was rosy for a time. The streets were improved; flowers, trees, and fountains were placed in the Plaza Mayor; the avenue to Chapultepec was laid out, and the castle decorated and occupied. Large loans were contracted in London to pay these bills and maintain the emperor's hireling troops—obligations which burden the people of Mexico to-day.

The emperor appears to have been a man of mild nature, elegant presence, accomplished mind, and winning manners; a stanch imperialist and extreme Catholic. His fanatical religious devotion was exhibited, by the way, when he walked barefoot, on a day of pilgrimage, some two miles out on yonder dusty road to the shrine of the Virgin at Guadalupe—a most interesting spot, rich in relics dear to native Roman Catholics.

In Maximilian's court the forms of state were punctiliously observed, with orders of nobility, decorations, and minute ceremonials; he maintained a state carriage modelled after the style of Louis XV., and used a pretentious service of silver that is now exhibited, and proves to be plated. The empress, whose charming qualities are much dwelt upon, was more intense and brilliant than her husband. In the great crisis of their lives she was the leader.

Thenceforward the scenes were rapidly shifted in our brief tragedy. The Liberals yielded not an inch in the face of this show of imperial power, though Juarez and his cabinet had been pushed to the extreme northern frontier.

The beginning of the end came when Maximilian, in October, 1865, signed the "black decree" which ordered that all republican officers taken prisoners in battle by the imperialists should be summarily shot as bandits. There was disaffection among the local leaders of the Church party, and the empire really rested on the hired Austrian, French, and Belgian legions. When the war for the preservation of the Union was ended in the United States our government intimated to Napoleon that the French troops must be withdrawn from Mexico. He yielded to this pressure. Carlotta left her country-seat at Cuernavaca to plead with the French sovereign for continued aid. He was obdurate; she went to Rome; her reason failed, and the desperate mission ended in her confinement in a castle of her native Belgium, near Brussels.

The emperor resolved to abdicate, and started for the coast; but this left the leaders of the Church party in straits, and they persuaded him to return to the capital. The army of Miramon had been driven south to Queretaro by the avenging Liberal uprising, and thither Maximilian went with reinforcements. The Liberals swarmed about the town, which the emperor called "a mouse-trap," gained entrance through the treachery of one of Miramon's officers—and the dream of an empire was over.

IX.

The Three Graves on the "Hill of the Bells."

The widow of General Miramon writes graphically of the last hours her husband, Maximilian, and General Mejia spent in the convent of the Capuchinos. She was with them three days before the execution, and records that her husband said, in the course of a conversation with his adopted sovereign: "Oh, sire, if I had listened to my wife's advice I should not be here now." "I am here because I listened to mine," rejoined the emperor—not reproachfully, but as if moved to state the exact fact.

The wife went to San Luis Potosi to intercede with Juarez for her husband. She represents the president as wavering, when his minister of foreign affairs interposed with the stern words, "It is to-day or never that you will consolidate the peace of the republic." So the scale fell against the imprisoned imperialists.

The emperor's confessor, the priest Soria, has left his record of the rest. Here it is:

> "The night before his death the emperor wrote two letters, one to the pope and the other to his mother. He confided both to me, together with a handkerchief for his mother.
>
> "On the following morning I accompanied him to the place of execution. The cortege was composed of three wretched coaches. I got into the first with the emperor, while Miramon and Mejia occupied, with their confessors, the other two.
>
> "Hardly had we left the convent when I was surprised to see Maximilian strike his breast, saying: 'I have put eight handkerchiefs here to keep the blood from staining my uniform.'
>
> "All the rest of the way the emperor busied himself with praying and recommending his soul to God. But on seeing the Hill of the Bells he exclaimed: 'There is where I had thought to hoist the standard of victory, and there is where I am going to die! Life is a play!'
>
> "And, after some moments of silence, he added: 'What a beautiful view! And what a beautiful day to die!'
>
> "When we had arrived at the place of execution it was found difficult to open the door of the coach. Then Maximilian, being impatient, leaped out of the window, knocking off his hat. He handed me the crucifix, embracing me. He also embraced Miramon and Mejia, distributed some gold coins among the soldiers who were to shoot him, and then, in a strong voice, pronounced in Spanish these words: 'I forgive everybody, and I ask that all may forgive me, and I desire that my blood, which is going to be shed, may be for

the good of Mexico. Long live Mexico! Long live her independence!'

"Immediately he placed his hand on his breast, indicating the spot for the soldiers to take aim at. Then the drums sounded, and in the presence of the four thousand soldiers assembled it was proclaimed that whoever should raise his voice in behalf of the condemned man would be made to suffer the same penalty. Not a murmur was heard among the immense crowd standing behind the troops.

"At a given signal the three platoons fired. Miramon and Mejia fell dead at once, but Maximilian did not die at the first discharge and uttered three groans. Then they gave him the *coup de grace.*"

That this extreme penalty was exacted with regret, there is no room for doubt. Bloodshed had been prolonged after the capture of the emperor until the exultant joy of the people was turned into a stern demand for revenge. Among those who pleaded for the life of Maximilian was the Princess Salm-Salm. She writes, "I saw the president was moved; he had tears in his eyes, but he assured me in a low, sad voice, 'I am grieved, madame, to see you thus on your knees before me, but if all the kings and queens of Europe were in your place, I could not spare that life. It is not I who take it, it is the people and the law; and if I should not do its will, the people would take it, and mine also.'"

The last words of Maximilian, the pathos of his death so bravely met, the sad fate of Carlotta, and the memory of the natural amiability of the dead prince, all unite to save his memory from execration.

The Liberal government did not molest the partisans of the empire, and thus the way was opened for the peace of the republic.

CHAPTER XX.

OUR SHARE IN MEXICO'S FUTURE.

I.

Perils in the National Outlook.

No thorough student of the actual condition of Mexico—after patiently and exhaustively weighing her environment and her population through personal investigation, and by means of all the information which he may have been able to gather from well-informed Mexicans, from American residents, from books, from published statistics, from newspaper letters, and out of the reports of the consular representatives of the United States—will regard that country as likely to at once, or soon, take her place among the rich, powerful, homogeneous, and progressive nations of the earth.

He will look upon her future with hope, and to the powers that be he will cheerfully yield a ready sympathy and a general approval that must often be qualified with much dissent as to the methods employed in attaining desirable ends; but he cannot accept the outlook as settled beyond the possibility of turmoil, or rest secure in the faith that republican institutions and liberal ideas are rooted so deep in intelligent and incorruptible citizenship as to be beyond the reach of disturbance, or even of a general overturning such as Mexico has so often experienced.

The probabilities fortunately and strongly favor a steady improvement along all desirable avenues of national growth.

The country is blessed at present in the men who guide her destinies, but on the succession of equally honest and competent administrations will depend the perpetuation of present advantages. The requisites for insuring this are not yet fully developed, and the wielding of an undesirably centralized power by selfish and designing men might produce disastrous results.

II.

The Serious Natural Disadvantages.

The reasons for such a general judgment and belief, tending more to optimism than to a gloomy view of the situation, have been carefully and, we hope, clearly presented in the pages that have preceded this closing chapter.

Mexico cannot keep pace with the United States for various reasons. First must be reckoned her geographical character. The immense table-land or plateau, two thirds of the country, is not readily available for farming operations, owing to the apparently almost universal need for irrigation, the scarcity of water, the uncertainty that artificial substitutes will ever suffice to remedy the lack of great water-courses that would be available both for stimulating harvests and transporting merchandise—for the country can boast not a single navigable river. The profitable agricultural specialties of the hot lands will not make up for these serious deficiencies, whose existence all admit. It must not be forgotten, too, that while the coast lands are desirable for their productiveness, they are hot, and to a greater or less degree unhealthy, and that outsiders who may embark in enterprises in tierra caliente will do so at some personal risk.

The greater portion of Mexico is deficient, also, in forests and in coal deposits. No want could bear more heavily and depressingly on the future than this last, which is the fundamental requirement of manufacturing as it is of railroading. Cheap coal, too, would be of decided assistance to the great mining interests that still remain the chief advantage of the country. Fuel for household use is not a necessity in Mexico, to be sure; but that is a lesser issue. The essential need remains, and it is a crying one. It is claimed now and again that coal-fields exist here and there, but all such alleged mines remain to be developed and worked and proved. They seem as yet to be merely speculative possibilities.

An immediate problem that confronts the capital, but no less concerns the national future, is the drainage of the city of Mexico. The expenditure of perhaps eight millions of dollars to this end is a necessity that cannot be much longer put off. It will be a work less gigantic, but it is to be hoped more efficacious, than the old Spanish drainage cut—a ditch 200 feet deep and 360 wide, that extends twelve miles, and can be seen to advantage from the cars of the Mexican Central Railroad.

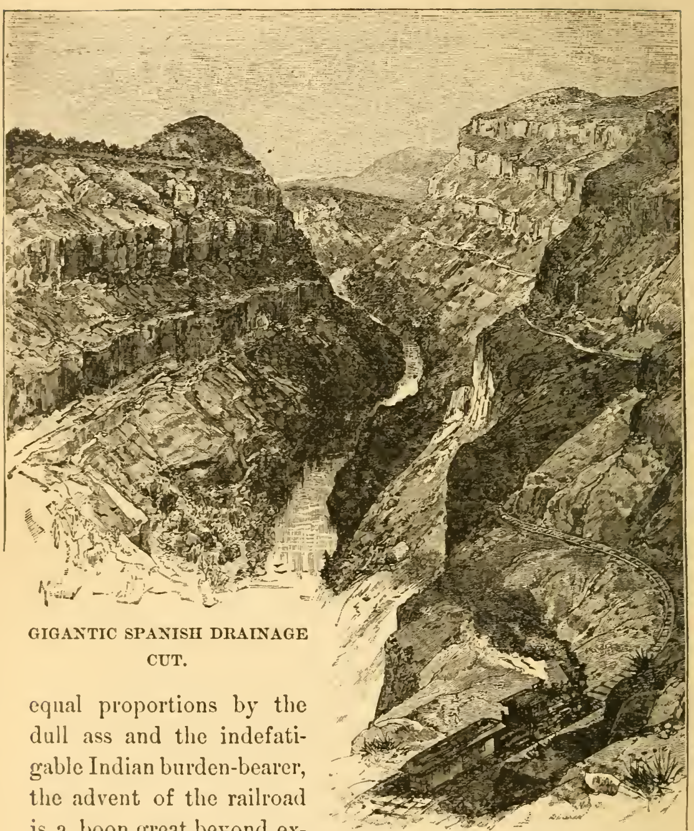
Such are the great natural disadvantages from which the future may open a way of escape.

Mexico is still a comparatively undeveloped country, as well as only a partially explored one. Of the regions along the Pacific coast much remains to be learned, and great expanses of territory in the southern portion of the republic are yet unfamiliar, the uninvaded home of Indians over whom the government exercises only the slenderest control.

III.

Necessities in Business and Politics.

In a country where the mule trail or the old Spanish highway have been the path of commerce, traversed in about



GIGANTIC SPANISH DRAINAGE CUT.

equal proportions by the dull ass and the indefatigable Indian burden-bearer, the advent of the railroad is a boon great beyond expression. The ability of the iron horse to facilitate business will be readily appreciated, but he cannot do everything for this people.

Mexico does not have a fair start in the race of the nations either in business or in her governmental life. This bit of old Spain, placed side by side with the prosperous

Western republic, suffers from the comparison. Of course she does! Her inheritances of customs, methods, beliefs, and prejudices that belonged to the Middle Ages are not easily shaken off. The people of the United States started without weights of this kind, while Mexico was fettered hands, feet, and conscience with Spanish selfishness and superstition. Remember that these people only achieved their full freedom from foreign political domination when Maximilian was shot in 1867. Surely since then remarkable advancement may be discerned.

But the task that remains to be accomplished before the will of the people can be supreme in wise and stable government, easily amenable to the orderly processes of the ballot, is great and difficult—nothing less than the education of many millions of Indians in books, in the habit of thinking, and in independent citizenship. Under the most favorable circumstances, time must be the ponderous chief factor in such an undertaking. Nothing can hasten, beyond a certain point, the solution of this problem.

Then, again, the land of the country will have to be at least measurably released from the hands of about 10,000 rich landlords, who now hold it practically untaxed. It must be opened for the occupation of the coming middle class, for the rights of the millions will have to be better respected.

Spain not only stripped the country of its wealth, but she crushed out every agricultural and other undertaking that might interfere with the sale here of any Spanish product. Mexico has not fully recovered her dwarfed growth since she achieved her independence from old country "protection."

An abominable tax system, imposed by Spain, and cherished by the people who know no better way, which literally suffocates the business of the nation, will have to be modified before very wholesome trade conditions can be made to exist. This whole question is being earnestly and widely discussed by the newspapers and public men.

The fact that the new generation are learning to speak English, and are more ambitious for that accomplishment than in the mastery of French, is a sign of the times. It would not be reasonable to expect that Spanish, now universally spoken, will be superseded by our language; but it is safe to say that the business man of the future will be able to conduct his negotiations in English, while that tongue may supplant in society what was "the court language" of other days. Young Mexico is going to make great changes in life here, and the most marked advance will be in the direction of Americanizing affairs. One readily falls into the universal habit, by the way, of habitually referring to the people of the United States as "Americans," notwithstanding the fact that these Aztecs are, after all, the real original product of this continent.

IV.

The Delicate Task Imposed on the Liberal Party.

Well, who are to reform these human influences and lift off these burdens that depress the country; to attack and solve imperative questions of government, graver and more full of peril than any to which the United States can point at this time? The gigantic labor falls directly on the Liberal leaders and the Liberal party, and their advance along the road of progress must be so regulated that no ill-advised disturbance of the existing order of things shall cost them their lease of power.

No outside investigator can give these men a single point concerning the needs of Mexico that they have not carefully considered in all its bearings, if not already attacked in the hope of some day reaching something like a remedy.

Weigh the Liberal position for a moment. The opposition, which is variously called the Church, Clerical, or Conservative party, entertains not one fundamental doctrine in common with the men who control affairs. The Clericals do not even acknowledge the validity of the reform constitution of 1857, for its existence is the bar against any resuscitation of the ecclesiastical power. Here is, in fact, a passive rebellion against the federal power, whose leaders only await the opportunity to become an active and most disorganizing force. It is, indeed, as if the Southern States of the United States declined to renew their allegiance to the government, and still hoped for an occasion which would enable them to revive the days of slavery, now forever prohibited in the redeemed Union.

This is why the Church press of Mexico was a stirrer-up of strife, a fomenter of bitterness towards the United States during the passing of the Cutting episode. The Church party have not forgotten or forgiven our conduct during the Maximilian period. It is to the everlasting credit of the United States that, when invited to join the allied powers in 1861 in enforcing money claims against Mexico—and our interest was a large one—we replied as follows:

> "It is true, as the high contracting parties assume, that the United States have, on their part, claims to urge against Mexico. Upon due consideration, however, the President is of opinion that it would be inexpedient to seek satisfaction of their claims at this time through an act of accession to the convention. Among the reasons for this decision are: First, that the United States, so far as it is practicable, prefer to adhere to a traditional policy, recommended to them by the father of their country and confirmed by a happy experience, which forbids them from making alliances with foreign nations; second, Mexico being a neighbor of the United States on this continent, and

possessing a system of government similar to our own in many of its important features, the United States habitually cherish a decided good-will towards that republic, and a lively interest in its security, prosperity, and welfare. Animated by these sentiments, the United States do not feel inclined to resort to forcible remedies for their claims at the present moment, when the government of Mexico is deeply disturbed by factions within and war with foreign nations. And, of course, the same sentiments render them still more disinclined to allied war against Mexico, than to war to be urged against her by themselves alone.

"The undersigned is further authorized to state to the plenipotentiaries, for the information of Spain, France, and Great Britain, that the United States are so earnestly anxious for the safety and welfare of the republic of Mexico that they have already empowered their minister residing there to enter into a treaty with the Mexican republic, conceding to it some material aid and advantages, which it is to be hoped may enable that republic to satisfy the just claims and demands of the said sovereigns, and so avert the war which these sovereigns have agreed among each other to levy against Mexico."

V.

Our Public Relations With Mexico.

We loved our neighbor in 1861, at the dark period when our own national existence was imperilled, and shall we do less now that we are knit again in an indissoluble brotherhood of states? The writer is profoundly moved to believe that every possible existing consideration, human and divine, calls on us to extend the hand of sympathy across the southern border, to be long-suffering, considerate, neighborly, and just towards these people whose cause so nearly resembles our own, and whose peace and prosperity will be vastly to our profit.

It cannot be possible that such war talk as has recently drawn attention to Texas should ever awaken any serious disposition among the masses of the people of the United States to acquire control over this neighbor republic. Any such absorption would give almost the death-blow to republicanism in the Spanish-American countries, and it would forever belie and shame the professions of a great power. We shall maintain all our own rights, and see that the weaker sister has all of hers; we shall protect our citizens, and insist on the recognition of all proper international courtesy; but we shall not enact the bully, or play into the hands of the reactionists and the imperialists, to whom war would give an opportunity that peace denies. Their success in overthrowing the Diaz government would go far towards undoing the advance which the nation has made, and every moral and material interest in which Americans have a part would suffer thereby.

We shall do well to bear in mind the conditions that exist on the other side of the border. The federal government of Mexico will do all that it can with self-respect to remedy abuses and remove just cause for complaint in the treatment of any citizen of the United States. It has too much at stake not to do this. But it is always likely to be seriously hampered, perhaps at critical times. The federal union is not cemented there as here. The predominating and uneducated Indian population are mere children in affairs, readily moved by prejudice, passion, and foolishness. It would be an easy matter for isolated and fanatical priestly influence to incite sporadic violence against American business men or missionaries, and then the press of this nation would blaze with fervid appeals for instant war. Let one such case occur, and the first loud, unthinking, popular cry would demand that Mexico be "wiped out." It is the possibility of such an episode that gives to reckless speech the dangerous quality of gunpowder, and may well cause anxiety to the friends of both countries. As a nation we cannot look back with pride on our former invasion of Mexico, and we may well cultivate moderation and good sense in the future. Certainly we are amply big enough to afford the dignity of such an attitude.

VI.

The Likelihood of Border Troubles.

The possibility of temporary irritation such as may lead to ill feeling between the adjoining countries will always exist at the border. It is a necessity of the situation that the boundary-lines, over which there is already some disagreement, shall be speedily marked anew and clearly, and that the frontier policing arrangements of the two countries be made thorough, efficient, and friendly, with as much leeway in the exchange of rascals as a due regard for the full protection of every individual right will permit.

The prevailing conditions are at least peculiar. On both sides of the Rio Grande River are men whose occupation is chiefly smuggling, and whose character partakes of that restless, adventurous, if not deeply criminal type which is common to frontier communities. Such persons are ever active and lawless in illegitimate enterprises. They have regard neither to the public good nor for the national fame, and it is very evident that many of them are "just spoiling for a fight." Both governments need to pay strict attention to such irresponsible characters, and they can do this with entire good feeling.

During the first term of General Diaz in the Mexican presidency a local agreement was made to surrender notorious criminals without regard to the question of citizenship, and the then governor of Texas issued a proclamation threatening to remove any county judge who should fail to comply with the understanding. This agreement, says a prominent Texan stock-raiser of the region concerned, "made property and person as secure on this frontier as anywhere, and the best of feeling prevailed between the people on the opposite sides of the Rio Grande."

Since then, however, the United States government has interfered in conspicuous instances with this free trading of criminals, to insist that all the formalities set up to protect our citizens in their rights and persons shall be observed. The Texan authority quoted above thus further illuminates the local situation:

> "The Rio Grande at Laredo and Eagle Pass is not deeper or wider than the Connecticut River at Springfield, Mass., and you can imagine how difficult it must be to maintain friendly relations between the people on the two banks, when men by merely fording the river are protected while they brag of their crimes with impunity. That this frontier has been inhabitable at all during the past two years has been due in a great measure to the peace officers in the two countries trading criminals with each other *sub rosa*, so that an evil-doer has not felt sure of the immunity to which he is legally entitled according to the rulings of the last administration at Washington (see Senate Ex. Doc. No. 98, Forty-eighth Congress, First Session), and insisted on by the present Secretary of State. The result of such trading has generally been substantial justice."

Of course, even "substantial justice," achieved at the expense of the forms of law, will not be long permitted, and the time has fully arrived when the public interest demands that our government shall regulate its border relations in a more thorough way, to the end that justice shall be fitly administered and the peace of the nation properly cared for.

VII.

Our Trade Relations.

When the United States asserts the "Monroe doctrine," and to a certain extent assumes to direct the future of the American continent, we ought to mean more than a warning to the weaker republics against the formation of European alliances. The chief value of such an attitude lies in the fact that this nation thereby morally binds itself to helpfulness in all those material interests which pertain to the mutual well-being of the countries concerned. Let us perform our duty towards an immediate neighbor, and find profit in it. Care for American interests—the eighty million dollars of capital that has been planted in Mexican railroads, as well as the money invested in mines and other business enterprises, to say nothing of our direct trade relations—would dictate such a policy as the only desirable one.

The stability of liberal institutions in Mexico will be greatly dependent on the national prosperity, and this we can do much to assure by reinforcing, through just commercial legislation, those private investors whose railroad lines are a leading factor in the more hopeful outlook. One may wonder at the courage that has projected the iron highways, but the fact of their existence should be utilized to open a wider market for our business men whose agents—from houses in the Texas cities of Galveston, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Waco, El Paso, and Fort Worth, and firms in New York, St. Louis, Chicago, and San Francisco—are already actively employed in the Mexican field.

The preliminaries to more intimate commercial intercourse were perfected through the good offices of General Grant, who died without seeing the reciprocity treaty—a creditable act of constructive statesmanship—accepted by our House of Representatives. For over three years this instrument has pended action on our part, and from time to time, at the request of this government, the period for promulgation of the laws necessary to carry the treaty into effect has been extended on the part of Mexico. The

United States Senate, at the late session of the Forty-ninth Congress, refused to accept Senator Sherman's resolution extending the time for consideration of the treaty, with a view to having it called up at the next session. The House, at the same session, accepted a report adverse to the treaty. The conclusions of that document, whose remarkable statements have been answered by all the preceding pages, need not be here repeated.

By this treaty the United States agrees to admit from Mexico free of duty twenty-eight articles, all but seven of which are now free under the existing tariff—chief among them leaf tobacco, sugar, fruit, and molasses—a total remission of duties amounting to $575,863; while in return for this Mexico is to admit duty free seventy-three articles.

The principal objectors to the above provisions have assumed that injury would be entailed to our sugar and tobacco interests. Yet the fact remains that with all her feared natural advantages, sugar costs a higher price in Mexico than in the United States, the unrefined article selling for 14 cents and above, while the higher grades are largely imported. It is said also that her tobacco cannot be raised and offered here so cheaply as the same crop produced in the United States; but, however that may be, it appears plain that her product is of a quality that would advantageously supplement our tobacco, and not rival it.

Still, were the facts less favorable to the treaty at these disputed points, it would yet be true that the advantages likely to come to sixty millions of people through the opening of our doors southward must constitute its sufficient claim to endorsement. The greatest good to the greatest number must bring about the modification of what is, in practice, a demoralizing system of out-door relief to favored interests and classes. Each step in the growth of Mexico will be to our direct advantage—if we can have her trade. The development of agriculture means the purchase of millions of dollars' worth of implements, machinery, and fertilizers; and a rise in the scale of living means demand for those manufactured articles that fill our factories and warehouses to overflowing. Under such a *régime* it could not be long before the foreign merchants settled in Mexico would be compelled to buy goods in St. Louis, Chicago, and New York. All the tendencies of such a commercial intimacy would be towards a better understanding and closer fellowship between the countries that are geographically united, for good or ill.

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